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A Narrative Inquiry Into Teachers' Experiences of Working With Hope

by

Lenora M. LeMay

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Abstract

The research puzzle, in this study, evolved as I made sense of making hope visible in my interactions at a centre that studied how intentionally using hope enhances quality of life. Over a period of 12 years I developed a set of five hope-focused practices (LeMay, Edey, & Larsen, 2008). In this dissertation I considered three conceptions or ways of working with hope and hoping in education alongside a fourth conception, which I named a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope. Following that I outlined the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) along with other theoretical considerations. My research puzzle asked: What are teachers' experiences with hope-focused practices in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992)?

I invited two teachers from two different school districts who were participants in ongoing professional development sessions to work alongside me to make sense of their experiences of working with hope-focused practices. Sheila, Carmen and I attended to their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) using the commonplaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) from January 2012 to July 2013. As we moved from field texts to research texts, we co-composed narrative accounts of their experiences. After looking across their narrative accounts, I identified four resonant threads. The first thread was learning to live with hope in early childhood. The second resonant thread was being in the midst of embodying hope. The third thread was sharpening an embodied way of being with hope. The fourth resonant thread was the courage to be with hope (Tillich, 1952).

By engaging in this inquiry I learned that hope matters but it cannot be imposed; the commonplaces of narrative inquiry inspire an understanding of a narrative conception

of hope as an embodied lived experience; and the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope makes it possible to live alongside the dominant conceptions of hope in education.

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Chapter One: Narrative Beginnings

After 18 years in the classroom, I found myself puzzling over the many references to hope and hopelessness in my field notes and journal entries as I worked toward my master's degree (LeMay, 2002). I was, at the time, trying to understand why I needed to be in conversation with other teachers as part of my professional development. Part way into my studies, I left the classroom to work at the Hope Foundation of Alberta.[1] At that time, I worked specifically with Hope Kids[2] who volunteered in an out of school program to bring hope to residents in Care Centres. Not long after leaving the classroom, I found myself engaged in conversations about the value and nature of hope and hoping.[3] Looking back now, I remember the excitement I felt, at that time, about connecting with Hollingsworth's (1994) work on being in conversations with teachers. The following journal entry, which I included on page 42 of my thesis (LeMay, 2002), demonstrates my feelings from that time:

> Hollingsworth's (1994) description of her six years of dialoguing with beginning teachers echoes how I understand my teacher identity on the university landscape. Hollingsworth wrote "more than gaining specific guidance for immediate

[1] The Hope Foundation of Alberta was a not-for-profit centre affiliated with Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta that provided service to the community and studied how intentionally using hope enhances quality of life. HOPE KIDS™ was one of several programs of the Hope Foundation of Alberta. The Hope Foundation officially closed its doors on December 31, 2012 due to a lack of funding to sustain the programs that enabled ongoing research initiatives.

[2] Hope Kids worked to make hope visible (i.e., created hope collages, hope kits, and went on hope scavenger hunts) with residents in care centres.

[3] As I began making sense of the value and nature of hope and hoping, I began to understand hope and hoping as both a product and process. Looking back, I realize it was engaging in conversations about hope and hoping as a product and process that brought me to this research study.

concerns, the conversations seemed to provide the intellectual stimulation and social interaction needed to create, act upon and analyze our own broader knowledge about teaching". (p. 47)

My conversations with Hope Kids, teachers, and students, during this time, led to the development of a set of five hope-focused practices[4] that were compiled into a resource called *Nurturing Hopeful Souls: Practices and Activities for Working with Children and Youth* (LeMay, Edey, & Larsen, 2008).

After nine years at the Hope Foundation of Alberta, I found myself gravitating back to graduate studies when I felt a tension[5] between how I storied myself as a hope-focused facilitator and how others storied me. At the time I storied myself as a facilitator who worked in relationship with teachers to develop the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). The moment I heard teachers tell me, "We are interested in talking about how the relationships shift, not in helping you determine how making hope visible in the classroom meets the outcome requirements for funding agencies,"[6] I wondered how I could make sense of how I appeared to be more concerned about meeting funders' outcomes than making sense of how relationships shifted when we worked with hope-focused practices. I enrolled in the doctoral program to make sense of the tensions I felt

[4] I outline the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in chapter two.

[5] Connelly and Clandinin (1999) describe tensions as the disturbances we feel in our interactions. The tensions represent epistemological or moral dilemmas in who we are and are becoming. (Clandinin et al, 2010) "understand tensions in a more relational way, that is, . . . between people, events, or things, . . . a between space" (p. 82), a space that enables inquiring into, as a way of making sense.

[6] As a not-for-profit agency and research site with the University of Alberta, the Hope Foundation increasingly relied on grant money with a particular set of outcomes that met the funding agencies mandate.

between the stories I appeared to be living and those I was telling about working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

Making Sense of My Experiences Alongside

As part of the last two classes for my doctoral studies I engaged in a pilot research study[7] as a way of making sense of my research puzzle. In the study, I used narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) to make sense of making hope visible and accessible in my interactions. The following story[8] surfaced from a journal entry I wrote on October 16, 2010.

A Tension-Filled Moment

> Although the quiet of the Wednesday morning wraps itself around me like a warm blanket, the feelings of anticipation and fear continue to zap through me like an evening lightning storm after a hot summer's day. I try to calm myself by concentrating on the books and images surrounding the solitary table in the resource room of the Hope Foundation. As I look over at how nicely the community resources are nestled in between theses, dissertations, and hope research posters I feel myself relax. I rest my eyes on the colourful research posters commemorating the tenth

[7] This research was approved by the University of Alberta ethics in the fall of 2010 and was part of two independent courses for my doctoral studies. In one course I concentrated on methodology and in the other I concentrated on my experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay, et al., 2008).

[8] I used arial font to signify moments in my dissertation where I tell stories of my experiences as a way of making sense.

anniversary of the Hope Foundation sitting on the top ledge. My thoughts slowly overtake my feelings as I drift back to another time.

Nine years ago, I did not have the confidence to pull together a poster on my master's thesis titled 'An Autobiographical Narrative Inquiry: My hope as an Educator' for the Hope Foundation's tenth anniversary. Instead, I chose to sit in this very spot wondering why the words hope and hopelessness reappeared in my journals when hope was merely an acquaintance in my life outside the classroom.

That feels like so long ago now, as I remember with a start, why I am sitting here this morning. I feel like pinching myself to make sure I am not dreaming as I wait for Margaret and Rachel[9] to arrive. I wonder how they will respond to the idea of starting off with writing and sharing a story about our experiences of working with the hope-focused practices and strategies (LeMay et al., 2008). Realizing that my fear and anticipation are connected to how they will respond when I ask them to write and share stories of their experiences of working with hope-focused practices and strategies during family group activity, I take out the story that I wrote last night in preparation for today. I wrote the story, hoping to inspire Margaret and Rachel to write their own stories, as a way of attending to

[9] Margaret and Rachel are pseudonyms.

the wonders that surfaced about our experiences of working with the hope-focused practices and strategies (LeMay et al., 2008) thus far.

Simultaneously I find myself trying hard to imagine Margaret and Rachel excitedly returning to school to share the stories they write later this morning with students and teachers. Just as the image begins to sharpen into focus, the pixels explode into a million pieces and are replaced with me standing alone in a snow-covered mountainous area. I realize it is the same image that woke me up a few weeks ago. I remember writing about the image upon waking from the dream. Thinking that I have at least five minutes before Margaret and Rachel arrive, I start flipping through my journal to re-read what I wrote the morning following the dream.

> In the dream I was the start official for a group of skiers. I took a few steps and the next thing I knew, I was standing alone. Aside from the snow-covered mountains that I could not see over, and the thick blanket on the ground around me, there was not a marker in sight. In an instant, I knew I had lost track of the group the moment they appeared in my dream. I remember that I could not tell if we were one or twenty-one mountain ranges away from each other.
>
> This dream tells me how easy it would be for me to become separated from the teachers by spending too much energy

> scanning the horizon. This dream tells me to stay close to the group of teachers, to honour their requests, to get in synch with their rhythms. It tells me that I cannot stray from their ongoing concerns and fears or they will be left standing at the starting gate. It is not about me giving them the signal or permission. It is about the teachers watching me for clues and cues. I am in a position of trust.
>
> Rather than wandering off into the snow-covered mountains by myself, I might want to wait until we are ready with the appropriate gear and supplies to sustain our way forward. More importantly, this dream awakens me to question what we need to withstand the elements. In some ways this dream provided me with a snapshot of the landscape we are about to embark upon. I am thankful that I have a new vision or image to help me make sense of what I am experiencing. [Journal Entry, September 10, 2010]

Unlike the morning that I wrote the journal entry, I feel less certain this morning, as I sit and wait for Margaret and Rachel. The fear of losing them in the process of sharing stories of our experiences tightens its grip around my neck. I get up and walk to the kitchen, hoping to re-embrace why I believed Margaret and Rachel might be open to the idea of sharing stories to begin our meaning-making this morning. I drift backward again

to the day Margaret approached me after she saw what transpired when youth created artistic representations of hope for the annual Hope Foundation's Hope Youth Art Show. She asked if she could bring her colleague to the Hope Foundation for a meeting to discuss how they might use some of the hope-focused practices and strategies in family group activities in her school. I remember it raining like it is today, when we first met to plan how they might introduce the hope-focused practices with their staff and students back at school.

That morning flew by. I tried to keep up to Margaret and Rachel as they imagined working with students and teachers back at their school. When the morning ended they asked if they could stay in the resource room for the afternoon to finish their planning. Their laughter billowed up the stairs all afternoon. It took every ounce of energy for me not to run down to join them. However, I wanted to give them the space they required to pull together their own ideas. I felt that I had provided a good overview of the five hope-focused practices during our morning together. They also had access to the ten hope-focused strategies in the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource (LeMay et al., 2008) to spark their imaginations. Earlier that morning, I shared how students in another school were creating "hopeful places stories" with residents in a care centre as a way of engaging in service. I shared how the teacher, in the other school, and

I talked about a change she made to make the stories more meaningful for her students and the residents. I hoped that sharing this story with Margaret and Rachel would encourage them in turn to use and adapt what made sense to them and to the teachers and students back at their school.

Although I was buoyed by the enthusiasm they demonstrated at that first meeting, I remember conversations with other teachers new to working with hope-focused practices and strategies (LeMay et al., 2008). Remembering the many requests for examples of what it looks and sounds like to work with the hope-focused practices and strategies, I wonder if I should run back upstairs to get the materials to make Carlyle[10] collages instead of introducing the story sharing activity. I wonder why I chose to share a story instead of waiting to create collages with them like I often do with Hope Kids. With all of this swirling around in my head, I listen for Margaret and Rachel.

My spirits lift when I hear laughter as Margaret and Rachel join me in the kitchen. I join in their chatter as they shake off the rain and unpack their bags. Just as I am about to sit down I hear Rachel say,

[10] I learned about the technique that I call Carlyle collage making from Instructor, a professional educator magazine when I was a classroom teacher. Over the last 5 years I have used the technique as one of many reflective tools. I cut out and arrange shapes of sponged construction paper into an abstract collage. When it feels right I write about what I notice about the image or images that are on the collage.

> The teachers were very inspired by what happened in the family groups. However, the teachers did tell us that they would have liked a demonstration of how to work with the hope-focused practices. The teachers told us that they were worried about relying on student experiences of the 7 C's of hope. [11]

Before I could respond, Margaret added, "We need more information about each of the 7 C's of hope in a more detailed lesson plan so that the students can understand each of the 7 C's of hope." Hoping to divert their attention away from planning how to teach the 7 C's of hope as carved in stone, I tell them about the 100-word story that I wrote the night before. I do this because I believe that the 7 C's of hope inform the stories that we live, tell retell, and relive[12]. I explain how I hoped they would, in turn, share their stories with teachers and students as another way to capture their experiences of working with the 7 C's of hope as a way of hoping[13] and knowing. Before I have time to share how a teacher introduced digital story telling in another junior high class, Rachel blurts out,

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[11] In my conversations with Ronna Jevne, the lead author on pulling together the 7 C's of Hope (Jevne, Williamson, & Stechynsky, 1999) I learned that the 7 C's of hope came out of one of the first research projects at the Hope Foundation where participants told stories of living with hope and chronic conditions.
[12] Clandinin & Connelly (1998) put forth a narrative view of knowledge that is "not so much as something given to people, but as something narratively embodied in how a person stands in the world," since knowledge as narrative is "experienced in context" (p. 157) through living, telling, retelling and reliving.
[13] Pruyser (1986) describes hoping as a way of being "which reality has thus far disclosed itself to the person and in the meanings which that person has found in these disclosures" (p. 125). My experiences with hoping as a way of being contribute to an understanding of how continuity, interaction and situation (Dewey, 1938) inform my knowing, which is fluid and embodied.

> I believe our students will struggle with writing a story without more guidance. We need to find a way to break down the 7 C's of hope so that the students have a firm grasp of each one, before they can write stories about their experience of working with the 7 C's.

Deciding to choose my next words carefully, I make one more attempt to retain the essence of working holistically, and with our stories of experience. I say,

> I agree. Digital stories take awhile to write. I believe the best ones come from our experience. What if we asked them to write about participating in the family groups so they are allowed to be creative when they tell a story about their experience?

When Rachel suggests that they ask students to create and write about a symbol to represent a moment from the school-wide family group activity, I jump in, perhaps a little too quickly, "What if students put their symbol, with the written text, into their hope folios as moments of experience? Then the students will have moments to choose from when you feel they are ready to create stories?" Remembering an earlier conversation about coping as one of the C's that would need a lot of time to work through, I add, "I believe there might be a student who will have a coping symbol. If they shared their symbols and writing they might develop understandings of the 7 C's from their own experiences."

I am thrilled to hear Margaret suggest that they write their own stories to share when they returned to the school. And then I hear Rachel say, “Could we pick something like a clip from a movie or text and have them identify each of the 7 C’s separately so that the students have an idea of what we are looking for?” At that moment I know it is time for me to leave instead of imposing my way of working with hope on Margaret and Rachel. I remind myself that I need to trust that they will take what they need from our conversation and not what I feel they need. I need to trust that they will share what they need to share when they return to the school. Most of all, I need to leave before I start imposing my way of working with hope as the ‘perceived’ expert from the Hope Foundation of Alberta. I stand up and say, “It is a good time for me to take my leave so you can make sense of what you need to do next.”

Unpacking This Tension-Filled Moment

After writing this story I repeatedly thought about the bumping up places or tensions that I felt in my interactions with Margaret and Rachel. I decided that I needed to return to the story to make sense of why I could not stop thinking about the bumping up moments I experienced that morning.

With that in mind, I identified and unpacked three tensions I felt as Margaret, Rachel, and I negotiated our way forward on that Monday morning. To do that I used

Schwab's four topics or desiderata (1962) (teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu) where "the teacher is seen as an integral part of the curricular process and in which teacher, learners, subject matter and milieu are in dynamic interaction" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 392).

Since I first met Rachel when I was facilitating a hope-focused activity with students in the school district I positioned myself as the teacher to understand the tensions I felt in this story. The subject matter in each of the tensions focused on the hope-focused practices that were integrated into the family group activities, and those that might have followed when Margaret and Rachel returned to their school. After brainstorming a number of ways that Margaret and Rachel could make hope visible throughout their school and the school year, Margaret and Rachel asked me to plan family group activities for students and teachers in their school. Therefore, although this story took place at the Hope Foundation where Margaret and Rachel, who were the learners in this moment, were drawn to learn about working with the hope-focused practices, it was in thinking about these practices occurring at their school where I felt tensions.

Inquiring Further Into the Tension-Filled Moment

The first major tension I felt occurred when Margaret and Rachel told me that they wanted to create a lesson with more information about each of the 7 C's of hope to present to students. I, on the other hand, wanted them to write stories of their experience as a way of determining what we needed to do next before creating a lesson. I felt the

second tension when Margaret and Rachel suggested that we find a way to break down the 7 C's of hope before asking their students to write stories of their experiences. The third tension transpired when Rachel wondered if, as teachers, they might not find excerpts from stories or movies to demonstrate the 7 C's of hope for students. I unpacked each of the three tensions in relation to the four commonplaces of learner, subject matter, milieu, and teacher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Schwab, 1962).

I felt the first tension a few minutes into our meeting as Margaret and Rachel sat down at the table in the resource room when Margaret announced, "We need some type of activity or lesson to add to the students' toolbox." Margaret and Rachel's hope for the morning was to create lessons for each of the 7 C's of hope. I planned to inspire Margaret and Rachel to write and then share stories of their experience of the school-wide family group event. I hoped to demonstrate how Margaret and Rachel might, in turn, inspire teachers back in the school to use student stories to begin to make sense of the 7 C's of hope. As I unpacked this tension, I imagined Margaret and Rachel's hopes for the morning arose from their conversations with teachers at the school who told Margaret and Rachel they needed a demonstration of working with the 7 C's of hope. I hoped to inspire Margaret and Rachel to share their stories with the teachers back in the school as a way of creating openings to construct meaning with teachers as I imagined we would that Monday morning. I imagined Margaret and Rachel sharing stories with teachers as a way of deciding how they, and the teachers back at their school, would go

forward in their interactions with students as they continued to work with the hope-focused practices.

The second tension occurred the moment Rachel shared that students back at the school would not be able to write a story about their experiences until they had a more formalized understanding of each word that began with the letter C. As I wrote in, around and through this tension, I began to understand that the tension revolved around my inability to present the 7 C's of hope as formalized knowledge—especially since the 7 C's came from threads in stories from individuals reflecting on their experiences of living with serious and persistent health conditions. At that time I hoped Margaret, Rachel, and I would make sense of our respective experiences so that Margaret and Rachel felt they could do the same with teachers and students when they returned to their school. However, I also remember wondering at the time how Margaret and Rachel viewed me as "the teacher" who did not appear to have a clearly defined understanding of each of the 7 C's of hope to pass along to them as the learners.

The third tension occurred when Rachel wondered out loud if movie clips or excerpts from stories would help students understand the 7 C's of hope. Hearing Rachel's suggestion reminded me of how often I hear adults tell me that children and youth are incapable of illustrating hope and/or hoping without first seeing exemplars. These same individuals are often surprised at how much more engaged students are when we start with their experiences. With this in mind, I wanted to use our experiences to inquire into how Margaret and Rachel might work with the hope-focused practices and

strategies (LeMay et al., 2008) in relationship with teachers. However, I was fearful of imposing a way of working with hope that would suffocate future conversations. Not wanting to impose my way of working with hope, I jumped up and announced that it was time for me to leave so Margaret and Rachel could construct a way of being with the 7 C's of hope that made sense both to them and to the teachers back at their school.

Perhaps the reason I left Margaret and Rachel when I did also had something to do with not knowing if their experiences were educative or mis-educative (Dewey, 1938). If their experiences on that morning were educative or as Dewey posited, growth inducing, I imagined us having future conversations to make sense of what happens when we work with the hope-focused practices and strategies in curriculum making[14] (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) with students on the school milieu (Schwab, 1962). However, I know from my own experiences how mis-educative experiences immobilize and slow down my actions toward future meaning making, when the experience is either foreign and/or too far removed from what seems possible. Looking back now, I hope I left when Margaret and Rachel were open to the possibilities of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

[14] Clandinin & Connelly (1992) put forth that as curriculum makers "teachers do not transmit, implement, or teach a curriculum and objectives; nor are they and their students carried forward in their work and studies by a curriculum of textbooks and content, instructional methodologies, and intentions. An account of teachers' and students' lives over time, is the curriculum, although intentionality, objectives, and curriculum materials do play a part" (p. 365).

Continuing to Unpack the Tensions I Felt

I envisioned Margaret, Rachel, and I working with the hope-focused practice of reflection (LeMay, et al., 2008) as a way of determining what each of us experienced as we worked with the 7 C's of hope alongside each other and with teachers and students on Margaret and Rachel's school milieu. I told myself that I wanted to start with what each of us knew and understood given our unique and respective personal practical knowledge[15] (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) about working with hope in relation to our experiences. Margaret and Rachel, on the other hand, wanted to create models or templates for teachers and students back at their school as a way of understanding the 7 C's of hope. I believe my intentions bumped up against Margaret and Rachel's, given our respective experiences and expectations of what is possible on the school milieu (Schwab, 1962).

By this, I believe Rachel's need to create a definition for the 7 C's of hope aligned with the universal and taken-for-granted story of theory as applied to practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Thinking back to when I first noticed hope and hopelessness in my journals, before working with Hope Kids I did not think I needed to make hope visible and accessible in my practices either. Back then I believed I knew how to help my students work toward goals that I set for them. It was not until I started writing in, around, and through photographs of what made me feel hopeful for one of my master's

[15] Connelly and Clandinin (1988) put forth that personal practical knowledge "is a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions for the future to deal wit the exigencies of a present situation" (p. 25).

courses, that I started to pay attention to my own thoughts and feelings about my hopes and fears as an educator.

As I reflected on the tensions I experienced with Margaret and Rachel on that Monday morning I also began to wonder about the stories that I lived and told as a teacher and curriculum developer regarding the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). The stories that I told before embarking on my doctorate suggested that the hope-focused practices were co-constructed as I worked alongside others. However, my dream and my experiences alongside teachers like Margaret and Rachel suggested otherwise.

As I reflected on how I might be imposing my way of being with hope with Margaret and Rachel, I realized that my stories to live by[16] (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) shifted when I attended to the bumping up moments I felt. Choosing to leave Margaret and Rachel when I did indicated a shift in my stories to live by. I say this because if I had not wondered what it was that caused the tension I felt I might have begun to impose a way of being with hope that did not make sense to Margaret and Rachel's experiences of being with hope. Attending to the tensions helped me to imagine other ways of working with a group of students who are reluctant to share their stories as a way of introducing one of the 7 C's of hope.

Attending to the tensions in my interactions with Margaret and Rachel led me to ask if and how teachers' stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) shift when they worked with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). *Stories to live by* represent a

[16] Connelly and Clandinin (1999) use *stories to live by* as a term for a narrative understanding of identities. In so doing, stories to live by describe how knowledge, context, and identity are linked and can be understood narratively.

narrative term, used by Connelly and Clandinin, to understand the relationship between knowledge, context and identity. With that in mind, I wondered if teachers' stories to live by or identities shifted during moments of tension in the way that Clandinin et al. (2006) assert when they said, "when these contradictory plotlines[17] conflict with one another tension becomes apparent, shaping awakenings that can lead to retellings and relivings of teachers' stories to live by" (p. 10).

My Research Puzzle

Unpacking the tensions I felt with Margaret and Rachel led me to ask: What experiences do teachers, who work with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), undergo in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992)?

[17] I talk more about how I worked with plotlines to make sense of possible shifts in Sheila and Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) in the methodology chapter.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

I came away from unpacking the tensions I felt with Rachel and Margaret wondering about teachers' experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). The seed for my research puzzle was planted the moment teachers told me they were interested in working with hope-focused practices because they felt relationships changed when they made hope visible and accessible in their classrooms. My wonder grew and blossomed as I unpacked the bumping up places I experienced on that Monday morning with Rachel and Margaret. As a narrative inquirer I knew that I needed to have a sense of the theoretical framework that supported my wonder to take root. I also knew that I would have to stay awake to other theoretical considerations along the way to ensure the growth of new learning along the way.

Since the tensions I felt appeared to have something to do with different ways of working with hope, I examined three broad conceptions or ways of working with hope in education.[18] Then I revisited the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) five years after they were published in order to offer a possible fourth conception or way of working with hope in education. From there, I addressed the nature of the ongoing, collaborative professional development sessions. Finally, I examined how Connelly and Clandinin's

[18] Although I believe my felt tensions reside with the role of schooling and not education per se; the literature I was able to locate consistently used education and not schooling. I noticed that philosophers and educators who wrote about hope before the turn of the 21st century were for the most part speaking about education for and in a lifetime. Writings in the 21st century, however, use the term education when they refer to the school as an institution responsible for education. With that in mind, I will use education as synonymous with schooling.

(1999) narrative notion of stories to live by influenced what I began to understand as narrative conceptualizations of hope.

Hope and Education

I wish I could count the number of times and ways that others have responded with astonishment, disbelief, and/or confusion when I explained that I work with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) with students and teachers in classrooms. When I explain further that I believe hope-focused practices are important in every learning situation, individuals often have more wonders about what I mean. This does not surprise me, given that hope and education are believed to be interchangeable or are used interchangeably. By this I mean that the idea that hope invigorates and is invigorated by education is as widely held as the idea that education invigorates and is invigorated by hope. Many individuals could not imagine having one without the other given the nature of their relationship. And yet, what is meant and understood about their connection and influence on each other is not often made explicit. Comments such as the following demonstrate what I found about the relationship between hope and education.

> Educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness. (hooks, 2003, p. xiv);
>
> Without hope there is no way we can even start thinking about education. (Freire, 2007, p. 87);
>
> Teaching in every respect is a profession of hope. (Perrone, 1991, p. 131);
>
> To teach is to be full of hope. (Nieto, 2003, p. 16);

> More than anything else, more than expectations, passionate engagement or standards, teaching is about hope. (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 57);
>
> Long after our students have forgotten the content of what we have taught, and long after that content may have been supplanted by new and different content, we still can be assured of one enduring lesson—hope can guide and empower a lifetime of learning. (Snyder, 2005, p. 81)

On the other hand, educational researchers like Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2009) assert that the vicious cycle of maintaining a positive self-attitude or pleasantness that is sometimes equated with "robust" hope can be counterproductive. Similarly, Duncan-Andrade (2009) warns about the demise of what he names "hokey," "mythical," and/or "deferred" hope. I know also from experience that imposing my hopes or ways of hoping onto others can constrain thoughts, feelings, actions, and ways of being.

Making Sense of Conceptions of Hope in Education

I believe that hope underpins, informs, and holds a variety of educational purposes and outcomes together in unique ways. Like a chameleon, it changes as it weaves itself in and across educational landscapes. It is difficult to see and/or describe because hoping, in itself is an elusive and unique (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Farran, Herth & Popovich, 1995), albeit universal, experience (Miller, 1989). As I puzzled further on the topic of hope in education, it became increasingly clear to me that the question of hope's purpose and place in education is where conversations about hope

sometimes diverge or end. With all of this in mind, I wondered if I might be able to group these different conversations into what I call conceptions or ways of working with hope as a product and process on the educational landscape in the same way that Eisner and Vallence (1974) depicted different orientations of curriculum. Using their work as an example, I set out to depict three conceptions that are in no way exhaustive. These conceptions come out of my experiences with students and teachers on a variety of school milieus. They also come out of my past experiences as a student from particular places and within a particular family and community. Finally, they come out of the literature that I chose to help me make sense of the elusive and contentious nature of hope and hoping as viewed and lived in different milieus. I put forth these conceptions as a way of beginning to make sense of the tensions I felt in the bumping up moments in curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) with teachers.

Like Eisner and Vallence (1974), I found myself wanting to use specific criteria to delineate the conceptions and yet I found the criteria slipping through my fingers each time I thought I finally had a firm grip on a conception. As such, I present a "partial and limited view"[19] of the ideological, epistemological, and ontological commitments that inform, and are informed by, each of these conceptions that invisibly thread knowledge, context, and identity, thus informing our stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

I put forth three different ways of experiencing the relationship that exists between hope and education. Each of these ways take on qualities of sacred stories and

[19] Piles and Thrift (1995) present essays that attend to how we map that which does not have precise boundaries, that is a set of different, intersecting, and sometimes conflicting positions that are always on the move and only partially locatable in space and time.

in turn, sacred stories of school (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Crites, 1971), which may explain in part why we do not find ourselves questioning the relationship between hope and education until we experience a disruption in our being and knowing. Sacred stories "orient the life of people through time, their life-time, their individual and corporate experience and their sense of style, to the great powers that establish the reality of the world" (p. 295) and are reflected in the mundane stories that people tell to make sense of the world. As I thought backward, I realized that it was when I experienced a disruption in the mundane stories that I told when teachers informed me they were more interested in relationships that prompted me to question the sacred stories of hope being lived and storied in education that I took for granted. I began by unpacking what I understood as the faith-based conception of hope and education.

Conceptions of Hope and Education

Conception 1: A faith-based conception of hope and education.

I believe that one way that hope is experienced in schools is through the narratives of religion[20]. I make this claim given the moments of tension that I experienced as I worked with teachers and students from a variety of faith-based milieus who wanted to make hope visible and accessible in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). With that in mind, I set out to make sense of how Islam, Christianity, and Judaism nurture and foster hope in educational milieus. In my search to make sense of how hope

[20] I used faith and religion interchangeably to make sense of this conception.

is lived out in faith-based schools I was not surprised by the diverse reasons provided for religious teachings in an increasingly pluralistic society. Most recently, there has been a resurgence of private religious schools in North America alongside a call for more secular education and heated debates about the role of religion in education. Moltmann (1975) describes this phenomenon best in his reflections on the philosopher Bloch's (1959/1995) analysis of hope and religion[21] when he states, "The infinite hopes of man are preserved in the religions" (p. 15). For Moltmann "this hope gives us orientation in time by pointing in a constant direction to the kingdom of God as the goal and fulfillment of history" (p. 19). In this way then, religion provides us with a sense of identity, stability, and security in the knowledge that we are connected to something beyond the despair that we experience, individually and collectively, in this increasingly fragmented and pluralistic world (Horell, 2004; Sweet, 1997). Another way of viewing hope in religion and hence in school milieus can be understood through an existentialist worldview. On the topic of existentialism in Islam, Gibbs (2005) writes:

> religion offers a powerful and important way of being in the world. . . . It accomplishes this effect by putting us in touch with—arguably in limited form in the vast majority of cases—the ground of being that is both immanent and transcendent, the same being in which self-affirmation and the courage to be are rooted. (p. 165)

[21] Bloch's (1959/1995) beliefs about hope without faith also appear in the second conception that I put forth.

Thinking about the words I hear in relation to hope like social justice, good deeds, and charity to describe faith-based school milieus, I turned to the New Testament (2 Cor. 4:11–5:10), which helped me to understand that there is a *way to be* in relationship with each other that ensures Christians will be granted a rewarding afterlife for good deeds done for others here on earth. In as much as religious hope relates to doctrine, there are others who believe that religion is just another ideological influence that restricts our capabilities and knowing (hence what is possible) in our becoming here on earth.

Conception 2: Critical theory, hope, and education.

A second conception or way of understanding the relationship between hope and education is lived out by those who feel that education's purpose is to create an awareness of how we are being manipulated by ideologies, religion, power relations, and cultural understandings so as to adopt new visions and courses of political actions that help us transform the world to become a more equitable place (Freire, 2004b; Giroux, 2003). I believe critical theory is grounded in two notions of hope and hoping. The first notion is that hope is an ontological need in each of us (Freire, 1972/2000). The second notion is that hoping without an accompanying action to break through the shackles that maintain our reliance on the status quo only leads to hopelessness (Freire, 1994/2004a). Freire believed in an ontology of hope grounded in our incompleteness (1972/2000; 1998) which called for, in his opinion, "a kind of education in hope. . . . that we must take every care not to experience it in a mistaken form" (1994/2004a, p. 3). Freire (2007)

argued for a liberating education wherein the "teacher's role is more than simply opening up a way. It is necessary, at times, that the educators have the courage to take responsibility for the job of showing the way" (p. 37). Further, Giroux's (2003) plea for an educated hope to awaken us to the dystopian hope of neoliberalism builds on both Freire's notions of hope, which like the religious existentialist views, are premised on Bloch's (1959/1995) philosophical writing on the Not-Yet-Conscious.[22] Halpin (2003) wrote, "a carefully calibrated criticism that arises out of a state of hopelessness may, paradoxically, liberate those who experience it to embrace modes of exciting reconstruction that, in other, happier circumstances might not feature as even remote possibilities" (p. 125).

Conception 3: A goal setting theory of hope and education.

A third conception or way of working with hope comes out of psychology and is positioned currently in the positive psychology movement that is based on building strengths in individuals. As a cognitive-behavioural approach, the roots of the goal setting theory go back to when hope's value began to rise as a potential therapeutic tool (Frank, 1968; Menniger, 1959) that could possibly be manipulated and augmented (Orne, 1968, p. 401). Frank's, Menniger's, and Orne's arguments, coupled with the notion put forth by Stotland (1969) that hope is "an expectation greater than zero of achieving a goal" (p. 2), led to a goal setting theory of hope (Snyder, 1994, 2002).

[22] Bloch (1959/1995) postulated that when the Not-Yet-Conscious is recognized and acted upon from one's daydreams, an individual moves toward and "into what is better" (p. 145) future in the now.

Snyder's (1994, 2002) goal setting theory of hope is based on the intersection of goals (cognitive targets or outcomes) that motivate and are realized by pathways (usable routes) and agency thinking (the perceived capacity to use personal pathways to reach desired goals). Since developing his tri-partite model, Snyder and his colleagues have correlated a number of desirable life outcomes with hope, at the same time putting forth that it is imperative that low-hopers learn from high-hopers' thinking and behaving. Snyder (2002) introduced an elaborate hope model to describe how high-hope and low-hope individuals differ in the "unfolding of the goal directed thought sequence" (p. 253). Snyder's hope model and the follow-up suggestions at each stage provide a step-by-step process for helping students who have either lost their ability to set goals or were never taught *properly* how to set and attain meaningful goals.

A possible fourth conception.

As I worked my way toward and through these conceptions, I remembered many times how difficult it is to begin conversations about hope and hoping and yet, when I think about how the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) evolved, it was finding ways to make hope explicit and at times visible in our interactions that led to a fourth conception or way of working with hope. In many ways this other conception or way of working with hope responds to Menninger's (1959) query, "If we dare to hope, should we not dare to look at ourselves hoping?" (p. 484). Menninger's 1959 presidential address to the American Psychiatric Association asked why psychiatrists were ignoring something

as important as hope by not talking about it in their practices and therefore not researching why or how it might make a difference in the lives of individuals. Thirty years after his query, Hope Foundation staff started to work with hope explicitly in the counselling program and then with those who participated in the HOPE KIDS™ program by asking questions and having conversations about hope and hoping. Working explicitly and implicitly with hope (Larsen et al., 2007) or making hope visible and accessible in the HOPE KIDS™ program led to another way of working with hope.

The fourth way of working with hope and hoping in education that I put forth is grounded in a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope. I believe this conception or way of working with hope and hoping both bumps up against and informs the three other conceptions.

A Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope.

As a narrative inquirer, I connected to my hoping self (Larsen & Larsen, 2004) by journaling and sharing stories about my experiences alongside Hope Kids who shared representations of hope such as the contents of their hope kits and hope collages, at first with residents in care centers and later with teachers who said, "Relationships change when we talk about hope." I also read about others' experiences of hoping alongside the limited research available at that time.

The first piece of literature was Lusted's (1986) definition of pedagogy. Lusted defined pedagogy as the knowledge produced in the interaction between a learner and

teacher or adult and child such that both come away from the interaction with new knowing about themselves, each other, and the subject matter being pursued in the interaction. I also read Van Manen's (1983) reflections on a pedagogic hope,[23] Freire's (1994/2004a) writing on a pedagogy of hope and the *Minerva Dialogues* (Jevne, Williamson, & Stechynsky, 1999). When I read, "The caregiver who does not listen conveys the message, 'I don't understand your hope, let's do my version of hope'," (p. 11) in the *Minerva Dialogues*, I began to make sense of how I understood a pedagogy of hope in relation to my experiences of making hope visible and accessible in my interactions.

Another piece of research that informed why I believed we needed to make hope explicit in our interactions with youth surfaced after I read about Herth's (1998) study with homeless children and youth. Herth's phenomenological study examined pictures that children and youth created to represent their experience and thus understanding of hope and hoping. It was Herth's study that provided me with the courage to suggest to educators that they start with students' representations of hope and hoping as a way to make hope explicit and visible in their interactions. After teachers shared what transpired in their interactions with students I began pulling together the set of hope-focused practices that eventually brought me to wonder about Dewey's influence.

[23] Van Manen (1983) puts forth that "the experience of hope distinguishes a pedagogic life from a non pedagogic one" and that pedagogic hope "gives meaning to the way the adult stands in the world, represents the world to the child, takes responsibility for the world and embodies or stylizes the forms of knowledge (p. ii).

Polanyi's influence.

When I began my work with Hope Kids, I was struck by their inability to explain to me how they were bringing hope to others in their interactions. As a way of making sense of what I was experiencing in my conversations with Hope Kids, I turned to Polanyi's (1958) explanation of preverbal experiences alongside those that we can articulate to acquire personal knowledge. Polanyi describes personal knowledge as a "subsidiary awareness of our body as merged in our focal awareness of external objects" (p. 60) such that "what we see or feel depends very much on the way we make sense of it" (p. 201). It also explains why I often asked teachers, like Margaret and Rachel, to start with stories or artistic representations to help make sense of working with hope as an evolving way of being and knowing, and not with predetermined definitions of, for example, the 7 C's of hope. Further, it explains why I believe the 7 C's of hope be used to prompt a deeper awareness of how our stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) are informed by hope and hoping as a way of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating as we move toward personally meaningful futures (Stephenson, 1991).

Although Polanyi's (1958) theory of acquiring personal knowledge through making sense of what we are and are not aware of helped me to understand my experiences, I increasingly found myself relying on Dewey's (1938) theory of experience.

Dewey's theory of experience.

Dewey's (1938) theory of experience[24], as an ongoing transaction between an individual and her/his environment, underpins my research puzzle, both ontologically and epistemologically. Dewey's notion of a transaction between an individual and his/her environment speaks to interaction as one criterion for an experience. The second criterion, according to Dewey, is continuity. Dewey believed that we come to know through being in relationship with the physical, social, and personal aspects of our respective experiences that unfold over time and into each other such that "every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences" (p. 35). In other words, Dewey believed that our unfolding experiences are the interception and uniting of two criteria: continuity, (over time), and interaction (personal and social). However, Dewey makes it abundantly clear that not all experiences are educational. Dewey describes mis-educative experiences as those that arrest or distort growth of further experience. Alternatively "every experience is a moving force" (p. 38) and therefore educative when "conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities" (p. 44). Therefore, we need to reflect on our experiences so that each experience, in itself, inspires and directs further growth (Dewey, 1938).

[24] Dewey (1938) identified two criteria of experience: interaction and continuity. An experience is always what it is because of the transactions that happen in interactions between an individual, objects and other people. Dewey's second criterion, continuity, draws attention to how each experience carries over from earlier experience into later experiences. Dewey put forth that "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 35).

A theoretical commitment to relationship.

The Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope is grounded in a commitment to the relational, ontologically and epistemologically. As Dewey (1938) suggests, we are always in relationship with our surroundings and each other and our learning comes from the relationship between one experience and the next. I say this because as I worked to make hope visible in my interactions over the last 12 years, I became increasingly aware of my own need to be in an ongoing relationship with teachers like Rachel and Margaret as a way of sustaining my own understanding of hope and hoping as a curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). I also became aware of the importance of being in relationship such that I chose to leave Margaret and Rachel when I did so that I did not impose my way of being and knowing on them. I am not sure I would have left Margaret and Rachel to make sense of their own experiences when I did, 12 years ago. In this way, then, I believe my way of being and knowing shifted over time as I attended to the stories I lived, told, retold and relived alongside others like Margaret and Rachel.

Narrative conceptions of identity.

Since I believe that as story-telling beings we are grounded in our stories (Bruner, 1986), I also believe we compose stories of our lived experiences as a way of making sense of who we are and are becoming. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) put forth, "narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience" (p. 18).

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) assert further "narratives are the form of representation that describes human experience as it unfolds through time" (p. 40). Like Clandinin and Connelly (2000), who drew on MacIntyre's (1981) notion of narrative unity and Carr's (1986) notion of narrative coherence, I believe that our lives are "filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 17). I believe that these narrative fragments represent, over time, the wholeness of who we are and are becoming as we attend to narrative coherence as a process of "telling and retelling, to ourselves and to others, the story of what we are about and what we are" (Carr, 1986, p. 97).

I say this because as I made sense of making hope visible and accessible in my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), I made sense of a set of hope-focused practices that, in turn, enabled me to stay wide-awake to who I needed to be and become in my interactions with others over time and in different places. As I see it, intentionally making room to inquire into the stories of my experiences of making hope visible and accessible in my interactions over the last 12 years in the HOPE KIDS™ program contributed both to the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope and my research puzzle. I turned next to consider what I was coming to understand as a narrative conceptualization of hope.

A narrative conceptualization of hope.

In considering what I was coming to understand as a narrative conceptualization of hope, I began with three ways of thinking about hope and hoping as an experience. I then worked with Nunn's (2005) narrative notion of hope to make sense of a narrative conceptualization of hope that contributed to who we were and were becoming. I started with three definitions of hope.

Farran, Herth, and Popovich (1995) posit that "hope constitutes an essential experience of the human condition [that] functions as a way of feeling, a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way relating [sic] to oneself and one's world" (p. 6). Stephenson (1991) describes hope as "a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful" (p. 1459). Jevne (1994) posits, "It *is* possible to know hope in the eyes of people, to hear it in their stories. It is as if each of us has our own Rubik's cube of hope embedded in the story of our lives" (p. 9).

These definitions of hope and hoping threading throughout our stories alongside Nunn's (2005) postulation that "every human has a set of stories, which can sometimes be thought of as action scripts" (p. 72) contributes to my understanding as a narrative conceptualization of hope. Nunn states, "A human being hopes by creatively using her narrative resources to try out possible states of affairs for narrative fit onto her self-narrative " (p. 72). Like Li, Mitton-Kukner, and Yeom (2008) who build on Nunn's (2005) narrative notion of hope, I believe that reflecting on how we work with hope by

attending to our stories may contribute to our ability to compose a coherent life plan. Dewey's theory of experience, a commitment to being in relationship alongside (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009), and a narrative way of knowing underpins both the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope and thus the hope-focused practices that contribute to a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope. I present the hope-focused practices that contribute to a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope next.

Hope-focused practices.

The original five hope-focused practices[25] were: paying attention to hope, listening with our whole being, encouraging reflection, engaging the 7 C's of hope, and participating in community service (LeMay et al., 2008).

Hope-focused practice 1: Paying attention to hope.

Paying attention to hope was, in many ways, the first hope-focused practice that surfaced. This is not surprising given the original mission of the Hope Foundation was to study how intentionally using hope enhances quality of life. Over time, psychologists at the Hope Foundation developed what is known as hope-focused counselling. Edey, Jevne, and Westra (1998) described this seminal work at the Hope Foundation of Alberta by saying hope-focused counselors "invite hope into counselling, ask questions about

[25] As this study progressed and I continued to work with other teachers and students in other schools and school districts we filtered listening with our whole being and engaging in reflection into the newly named hope-focused practice of engaging in narrative reflection (Clandinin, Cave, & Cave, 2011).

hope, encourage creative and symbolic representations of hope" (p. 4). When Hope Kids began visiting residents, they replicated many of these ways of making hope explicit. Hope Kids made hope collages and hope kits with residents. They went on hope scavenger hunts in the centers where residents lived. The hope-focused strategies that encourage paying attention to hope have since evolved to include activities like noticing signs of hope on a hope walk or taking photographs of hopeful places in the community. The hope-focused strategies are sometimes used to do a hope needs assessment when planning a service project. I purport that paying attention to hope and hoping connects us to what nourishes and supports thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and ways of relating as a way of remaining open to the possibilities that exist to promote and/or move out of and into new educative experiences (Dewey, 1938).

Hope-focused practice 2: Listening with our whole being.

Listening with our whole being evolved as one of the hope-focused practices as teachers on extended-disability storied and restoried their experiences of participating in the Teacher Hope Initiative.[26] I asked the teachers in the Teacher Hope Initiative research project if we might make sense of what I was noticing in our conversations about their experiences regarding times when they felt "listened to". These discussions turned to the importance of listening with our whole being as a way of nurturing and supporting hopeful interactions and ways of being. Since that time I ask workshop

[26] This research (LeMay & Edey, 2008) used narrative inquiry to make sense of the experiences of teachers who participated in the Teacher Hope Initiative, a support group for teachers on extended disability leave.

participants to brainstorm words and/or drawing representations to describe what *it* sounds, feels, and looks like when someone is listening with their whole being. In their study to understand client accounts of hope in early counselling sessions, Larsen and Stege (2012) found that "feeling understood and validated contributed to client hope" (p. 47). As such, I believe that listening with one's whole being contributes to an educative experience (Dewey, 1938) since listening with one's whole being makes it possible to make sense of paying attention to another's hope(s) and/or way of hoping.

Hope-focused practice 3: Encouraging reflection.

As I listened to the Hope Kids' stories, I wondered at first how I could bring attention to what we were learning about ourselves and about our own hope as we lived and shared our stories alongside others. I was inspired by my experiences with Hope Kids and by Jevne (1994) who stated, "By reflecting on the moments that have left an unquestionable impression on us, we can begin to see a pattern that is the personal story of how hope has been born, challenged, assaulted and enhanced throughout our lives" (p. 9). I included engaging in reflection as one of the hope-focused practices. I had a repertoire of strategies to choose from given our interactions with Hope Kids and students in classrooms who were reflecting both as a way of "knowing-in-action" and reflecting-on-action" (Schön, 1983). By the time reflection was included as a hope-focused practice (LeMay et al., 2008), I was well aware of how many times children, youth, and adults asked for more quiet time once they experienced the quiet reflective

space that was intentionally created. I was also well aware how important it was to engage in reflection with and alongside participants in the workshops and professional development sessions that I facilitated as a way of connecting to the participants' hopes and fears as well as my own hopes and fears. Thus, as the teacher, I also reflected on and shared my experiences.

I thought about how "knowing-in-action" refers to "the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life" (Schön, 1983, p. 49). Therefore, creating spaces and moments to explicitly attend to experiencing hope and/or fear or feelings of hopelessness in the moment enables a looking "back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealings with further experiences" (Dewey, 1938, p. 110). For example, when I unpacked the tensions I felt in my interactions with Margaret and Rachel on that Monday morning, I made visible how I almost imposed my way of understanding and being with hope instead of being more attentive to their experiences and ways of being and working with hope.

Hope-focused practice 4: Engaging the 7 C's of hope.

As I stated earlier, I learned about the 7 C's of hope from the stories of individuals with serious and persistent health conditions (Jevne et al., 1999). I began using the 7 C's of hope primarily as an organizer to inspire audiences during speaking engagements to think about their own hope and hoping. Often times, teachers begin with the 7 C's of hope as Margaret and Rachel did. I felt tensions in the curriculum-making

moment (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) with Margaret and Rachel that were in relation to the 7 C's. The 7 C's of hope are community, communicating, coping, caring, creating, committing, and celebrating. I start with community.

I believe that paying attention to what makes a *community* a hopeful community alongside being a part of a community that contributes to hopeful feelings creates an awareness of how belonging to a community nourishes and sustains hope, individually and collectively. *Communicating* phrases—words that are hopeful like "I wonder," "when," "what would a hopeful person do?" and "I believe" encourage possibilities of thinking and acting. Sharing stories of *coping* through adversity or grieving so as to build a set of ways of being can help when things seem impossible or overwhelming. Creating tableaus of *caring* with and caring for (Jevne, 2005) and discussing how these two ways of caring are similar and different opens up new ways of being in relationship. Charting what *commitment* looks, sounds, and feels like, and then telling stories of times when commitments were kept or what it means when a commitment is made appears to have something to do with persevering through difficulties. Since hoping is a creative process (Herth, 1998; Jevne, Nekolaichuk, & Boman, 1999; LeMay, 2002; LeMay et al., 2008), finding ways to express the embodied nature of experiences *creatively* nourishes who we are and are becoming as unique individuals. *Celebrating* with each other can foster small steps toward an uncertain future. A celebration can be as small as honoring how one managed to cope through a very difficult period or recognizing supportive individuals.

Hope-focused practice 5: Participating in service.

It was my experiences alongside Zimmerman's (1990) research that suggested that adults who engage in service gain a sense of what he calls learned hopefulness that supported my decision to move forward with adding service as one of the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). Like other programs and services at the Hope Foundation of Alberta, the HOPE KIDS™ program was created to meet the needs of youth who wanted to bring hope to lonely people in their communities. Adult facilitators worked with Hope Kids to pay attention and reflect on hope as a way of being with residents in care centres by incorporating some of the strategies used by counselors in the Hope-Focused Counselling program. Not long after joining the program I noticed that Hope Kids returned week after week and often year after year of their own volition to participate in the out-of-school program. Second, I noticed that when teachers found ways to incorporate the program into the school day, they, too, were intrigued by what they were noticing about students' interests, capabilities, and hopes in different places and in different situations over time.

Ongoing, Collaborative Professional Development Sessions

When I could no longer live vicariously as a classroom teacher through colleagues who shared their experiences of working with narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in their graduate studies with me, I began my own graduate studies. Four years later, I concluded my master's thesis with:

> I do not think that it was a coincidence that I chose to write an autobiographical narrative inquiry to find out why I needed to be on a professional knowledge landscape[27] that honoured my personal practical knowledge . . . . I strove to create a different future on the professional knowledge landscape where I could create, with others, new possibilities and ways of being. . . . to harmonize my internal and external world to create a meaningful and purposeful present from which to move into an uncertain future. (LeMay, 2002, pp. 146–148)

This space that I imagined at the end of my master's did not come to fruition immediately. It evolved over time as I worked alongside Hope Kids and adults who volunteered in the HOPE KIDS™ program, and later with teachers and students in classrooms. I remember worrying about being viewed as an expert when I was learning about hope and hoping alongside and with the existing paucity of research about hope at that time. An entry from my journal in those early years demonstrated my concern with being viewed as an expert as opposed to a colleague working alongside.

> Driving home from the 'training session' I could not help wondering how to tackle the next mystery. . . . I felt confident I could provide 'some support'. . . . I do not and cannot come away as the <u>expert</u>. Not only does that not fit my style – I believe that would ruin the integrity of the program and my identity as an educator. (Journal Entry, December 12, 2003)

[27] Clandinin and Connelly (1995) put forth that "understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of people, places and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relations among people, places, and things, we see it both as an intellectual and a moral landscape" (pp. 4–5).

Later, when I was asked by staff in a school how to use hope to help students envision a future in which they could participate, I suggested we start by asking students to represent their understanding of hope and hoping in the way that Herth (1998) did in her study with homeless children and youth. I listened to the staff excitedly tell me about their experiences as a result of starting with what the students understood about hope, hoping, and their hoping selves (Larsen & Larsen, 2004). In turn, I shared our ensuing conversations with others who eventually joined us at the Hope Foundation to continue the conversations.

Up until the moment I heard that outcomes were my problem in one of these professional development sessions, I felt that we, as a collaborative community, were creating new understandings about our experiences of working with hope as a way of being and knowing alongside the research that I read. I believe I managed to create spaces where individual teachers could share stories of their practices with making hope visible and accessible in their interactions. As such, it was both an intellectual and moral place and space from which to make sense of the policies and expectations of living on the school landscape. Looking back now, I find it amusing to think that I had created a safe space and place for educators to encourage and be encouraged to hold onto their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) so much so that they told me that outcomes were my problem and not theirs. However, I am grateful, on the other hand that the teachers inspired me to puzzle over what felt like a disruption in the stories that I

was telling about my experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

Research Puzzle Revisited

Having considered three possible conceptions of hope in education alongside a fourth that I put forth as a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception, I turn next to unpack how narrative inquiry, as a methodology, helped me to make sense of the experiences of two teachers as they worked with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Since my research puzzle evolved as I attended to my experiences as a hope-focused educator at the Hope Foundation of Alberta, I chose narrative inquiry as my methodology to help me make sense of how two teachers constructed and reconstructed their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as they experienced the hope-focused practices in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) put forth that narrative inquiry is both a phenomenon and methodology. As such, they posit that:

> Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of the view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomena. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomena under study. (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477)

Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) conception of narrative inquiry as a research methodology and phenomenon is premised on a narrative view of experience that builds on Dewey's (1938) understanding of experience as a moving force, such that "every experience influences in some degree the objective conditions under which further experiences are had" (p. 37). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote "narrative inquires are always composed around a particular wonder, a research puzzle" (p. 124) and "as an inquirer reads and rereads her field texts on the way to composing research texts, the phenomenon, the what of the inquiry, is among the topics that press on the inquirer" (p. 125). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) put forth that as a research methodology, narrative inquiry brings "theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (p. 3).

Making sense of human life as lived in narrative inquiry means attending to the commonplaces of temporality, sociality and space that exist within the metaphorical three-dimensional space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As a conceptual framework, the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space acts as a guide to ground the simultaneous exploration of temporality, sociality and place. Temporality enables a narrative inquirer to attend to the past, present, future as he/she attends to the stories that are lived, told, retold and relived. This requires understanding "people, places and events as in a process, as always in transition" (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007, p. 23). Sociality encourages narrative inquirers to stay awake to the personal, that is the "feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions" (Connelly &

Clandinin, 2006, p. 480) of the inquirer and participant(s) on the one hand and the social conditions, "that is the existential conditions, the environment, surrounding factors and forces, people and otherwise, that form each individual context (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 23) on the other hand. Finally, by attending to the commonplace of place, narrative inquirers attend to "the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequence of places where the inquiry and events take place" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480).

Why Narrative Inquiry

I tell people that I did not choose narrative inquiry; it chose me. To begin with, I embarked on my master's after being inspired by my conversations with colleagues who were using narrative inquiry in their graduate studies. I believe it was narrative inquiry that inspired me to inquire into my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) and, in turn, to reconnect to my hoping self (Larsen & Larsen, 2004) in my master's thesis (LeMay, 2002). I believe it was attending to my experiences with narrative inquiry in my master's thesis alongside my early experiences as the newly appointed manager of the HOPE KIDS™ program that provided me with the courage to leave the classroom when I did in 2003. I say this because as I managed the HOPE KIDS™ program, I became curious about the stories that Hope Kids and I lived, told, retold and relived as we made hope visible and accessible in our interactions.

Making sense of hope and hoping.

I believe narrative inquiry enabled me to work with the messy and elusive nature of hope and hoping (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Farran et al., 1995) as it threaded inward and outward, forward and backward, and between different places and situations in my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) over the last 12 years.

I say this because after completing my master's thesis (LeMay, 2002) I continued to write journal entries about my experiences of making hope visible and accessible. I wrote about the joy I felt in being able to live stories that I imagined myself living before I began my master's thesis (LeMay, 2002). I also wrote about my fear of imposing a way of being even though I always came away feeling inspired about what I was learning about myself when I engaged in conversations about making hope visible and accessible in my interactions. I wrote about the stories I heard from others that suggested that "particular youth" benefited from making hope visible and accessible when my experiences suggested that something happens to "all youth" who make hope visible and accessible. I wrote and reflected on the wonders that surfaced from colleagues around the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (CRTED) Tuesday Table to tell and retell stories of my experiences with other narrative inquirers.

When my colleagues at the Hope Foundation of Alberta and I were creating the taxonomy for the Hope Lit Database[28] in 2004, I insisted that we include narrative inquiry as one of the methodologies to make sense of our experiences of working intentionally with hope. I insisted we include narrative inquiry because narrative inquiry

[28] The Hope Lit Database, found at www.ualberta.ca/hope holds up-to-date research on hope.

had become an interpretive pathway for me to continue to make sense of my experiences alongside Hope Kids, community members, teachers, and colleagues at the University of Alberta's Centre for Research and Teacher Education and Development research table,[29] and at the Hope Foundation of Alberta.

All this time, I struggled to keep the doors of the Hope Foundation of Alberta open by telling stories of my experiences to possible funders and sponsors. I worked hard to help others understand how important it was to provide a place to puzzle over the nature and value of hope. I did this because I realized, soon after arriving at the Hope Foundation, that having a place and the space(s) to trouble over my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) alongside other hope-focused practitioners and researchers nourished and sustained a way of being that made sense to who I was and was becoming.

Learning about the importance of being in relationship.

Reflecting backward also helped me to make sense of how important it was for me to be in relationship as I made hope visible and accessible in our interactions. Therefore, when I heard teachers suggest to me that they might not be alongside if I chose to focus on outcomes, I decided it was time to take a closer look at how I was or was not making sense of my personal hopes, dreams and wishes alongside the social exigencies that brought me to worry about outcomes. Looking backward, I learned that

[29] Since the Hope Foundation was on the University of Alberta campus I participated in the Tuesday research table conversations in elementary education in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development whenever time permitted. During these one and a half hour conversations, other researchers. teacher educators, and I shared and inquired into the stories that we told and retold.

relationships both drove me to this research puzzle and determined how I needed to be alongside so that I would stay awake to the personal, practical and social justifications for my research puzzle. As Clandinin (2013) put forth:

> In narrative inquiry we intentionally come into relation with participants, and we, as inquirers, think narratively about our experiences, about our participants' experiences, and about those experiences that become visible as we live alongside, telling our own stories, hearing an other's stories, moving in and acting in the places—the contexts—in which our lives meet. We intentionally put our lives alongside an other's life and to others' lives, to the present time and to other times, and to this place where we meet and to other places. . . . We are relational inquirers, attentive to the intersubjective, relational, embedded spaces in which lives are lived out. We do not stand metaphorically outside the inquiry but are part of the phenomenon under study. (pp. 23–24)

Finally, as I reflected on why I chose narrative inquiry, I felt the resonant remembering (Hoffman, 1994) of looking at a photograph of myself asleep at the chalkboard (Greene, 2001) while working on my master's thesis.[30] In other words, I wondered if, at some level, that I knew I needed to stay awake to my experiences by attending to the inherent tensions in my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as a way of imagining myself participating in a personally meaningful future. Hoffman suggests that "the emotional meaning of events is recognized, for subjective thought, and

[30] I refer here to a photograph that I titled 'Despair' to describe what I looked like in front of a group of students before I chose to take a leave from the classroom in 2000.

for the probing of survivors' own internal journeys" (p. 2). With all of this in mind, I turned to examine other resonant remembering(s) and imaginings from previous research studies that helped me navigate myself forward to imagine myself making sense of the experiences of two teachers' who were working with the hope-focused practices in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

Beginning My Research Study

Research participants.

Given my experiences in two previous studies of making sense of working with some of the hope-focused practices (LeMay, 2004[31]; LeMay & Edey, 2008), I was well aware of how long it took to develop a relational space wherein participants felt comfortable sharing stories about their experiences of hoping. I also knew how long it took to develop a similar dialogic, relational space in the ongoing and collaborative professional development sessions with teachers.

Criteria for selection.

As a result, I invited teachers[32] who chose to engage in the professional development sessions for at least one school year and not more than two years to become participants in the research study. I chose not more than two years since it was around

[31] The unpublished 2004 study was also with two teachers, Olivia and Martin, who participated in one workshop on making hope visible and accessible in their lives.

[32] I describe in more detail how I invited participants in chapters four and five.

the two-year mark of working with teachers that I often noticed what felt like shifts in some of the teachers' stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). That is, I observed teachers beginning to embrace some of the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). Second, I hoped one of the participants would be from a faith-based school district given my experiences with teachers in faith-based school districts alongside how I understood a faith-based conception of working with hope. Third, I knew that my participants needed to understand the commitment I needed from them to make sense of the uncertainties and messy nature of attending to the artistic representations, commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) alongside the messy nature of making sense of hope and hoping. Participants also needed to be comfortable with my visits to their classroom as a participant observer. Fourth, participants needed to negotiate release time with their administrators to attend the professional development sessions. Finally, they needed to agree to continue our last sets of conversations, classroom visits, and planning with a different set of students in the following school year.

Ethical considerations.

Since relationship is central to Dewey's (1938) theory of experience, relationship is also critical in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Murphy, 2009). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) state:

> Following Dewey, the narrative inquirer takes the sphere of immediate human experiences as the first and most fundamental reality we have . . . and focuses on the way the relational, temporal, and continuous features of a pragmatic ontology of experience can manifest in narrative form, not just in retrospective representations of human experience but also in the lived immediacy of that experience. . . . Following from this ontology, the narrative inquirer arrives at a conception of knowledge . . . of human experience that remains within the stream of human lives. (p. 44)

I worked hard to nurture a relational space (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005) in my interactions with participants as we attended to the social and personal in our forward and backward thinking in different situations and places. Bergum and Dossetor refer to a relational or third space, as they call it, to having a flow between two parties such that the space "does not negate the others' beliefs and knowledge" (p. 87). In a relational space attention is paid to developing mutual, open respect and trustworthiness by exploring and acknowledging the vulnerabilities, uncertainties, and ambiguous nature of each person's ongoing experiences. Bergum and Dossetor suggest this can be accomplished by participating in a dialogic conversation that "requires openness, in which one must be willing and able to reveal oneself to others and also be willing and able to accept others' revelations" (p. 130); and second by recognizing "that people live in a specific historical and social context as thinking, feeling, full-bodied and passionate human beings, in other words through embodied expressions" (p. 137). Since the dialogic conversation that

Bergum and Dossetor suggest requires nurturing, I made a point of taking time to write in my journal and/or create representations to work through any tensions that I felt before, immediately after, and in-between each of my interactions with both Sheila and Carmen to acknowledge and help us make sense of any tensions that arose in the stories that they lived, told, retold, and relived (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Bergum and Dossetor (2005) also stress how important it is to work alongside participants in a relational space as if they are about to sign the consent form at every moment. To this end, I checked with my participants periodically to ensure their ongoing consent. In so doing, I ensured they were fully aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I also kept an ongoing list of available expertise in the event that an issue did arise during the study. Simply put, I knew it was my responsibility to ensure participant trust and safety during and after the research text was published. That being said, there were moments when I had to check in with my participants and advisors to ensure that I was doing everything possible to maintain the participants' anonymity given that their administrators were aware of our ongoing sensemaking on and off the school landscape.

Research Timeline

In my candidacy proposal I anticipated dividing my interactions with teachers into three distinct time frames or periods: the first in the winter of year one, the second in the late spring of year one, and the third in the fall of the following school year. I imagined

the beginning of each time period being marked by the teachers participating in a professional development session, followed by a visit from me as a participant observer to their classroom for a half-day, and followed once again with a research conversation between each teacher and myself.

Although I proposed to begin my work with teachers in November 2011 and to finish our conversations in December 2012 of the second school year, it was not until December of 2011 that I received ethical clearance to begin research in one district, and well into January 2012 before I received permission to begin in the second school district. After receiving permission from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta, I applied for permission with CAPS[33] in the two urban school districts that I worked with most recently. When I received permission from CAPS, Dr. Clandinin emailed letters to teachers.

I met with my first participant, Sheila[34], in early January 2012 to discuss her participation in my research study after we met in October for our first professional development for the "2011–2012 school" calendar year. We were unable to have a third professional development session, as I had imagined, given that the Hope Foundation officially closed its doors on December 2012. I attempted to bring the teachers in Sheila's professional development session together in February 2013 for dinner in a restaurant on two different occasions, in what would have been our third professional

[33] After receiving approval from the Research Ethics Board, I needed to also obtain permission through the Cooperative Activities Program to conduct research in the two school districts where my participants taught.

[34] Sheila is a pseudonym.

development session. However, because Sheila and I were the only ones who successfully made it to dinner, we had a research conversation on February 6, 2013 instead. I shared the final draft of Sheila's narrative account with her on April 27, 2013. In addition to the two professional development sessions Sheila and I had nine conversations in total. I visited her classroom as a participant observer on two occasions and volunteered in her classroom on two other occasions.

Carmen[35], my second participant, and I met for the first time on March 30, 2012 to negotiate our way forward, although, like Sheila, Carmen and I participated in the first 2011-2012 district professional development session on November 9, 2011. As with Sheila, Carmen and I did not participate in a professional development session in the 2013-2014 school year. I shared Carmen's final narrative account with her on July 2, 2013. In addition to the two professional development sessions Carmen and I met six times for research conversations. I visited her classroom as a participant observer on two occasions, as a volunteer on one occasion and to see how she was changing up her classroom for the Grade 6 students just before school started in the fall.

Field Texts to Research Texts

Field texts.

I composed field notes of my observations when I was with Carmen and Sheila in the two professional development sessions, in my classroom participation and in our

[35] Carmen is a pseudonym.

research conversations. I always worked with the field notes a second time, immediately after making them, to add the contextual information and details I needed to make sense of what I experienced in the moment(s) I wrote in the field notes. I also used the times immediately after to return to the moment to wonder and to add resonant rememberings (Hoffman, 1994), imaginings, and reflections using the other two narrative commonplaces of sociality and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Over time my field notes and the writing I did in and around and over them became two kinds of field texts. In addition to those field texts other field texts included representations like the scavenger hunt and hope tree activities completed with participants in the ongoing, collaborative professional development sessions; transcripts of audio recordings of our research conversations, Carlyle-like word images[36]; concept maps, and Venn diagrams I created to help organize what I was learning about each of my participants' experiences.

In addition, I relied on three journals. I had my paper journal and two journal files on my computer—one I named "journal" and the other "methodological journal." Dr. Houle, a colleague from the CRTED Tuesday table, suggested I create a table of contents on January 7, 2012 as a way of organizing my three journals. On the table of contents I documented the date, name of the entry, and where I wrote or saved it on my

[36] Huber and Clandinin (2005) used word images to create brief and evocative ways to represent the lives of research participants. I created word images by choosing words that resonated and stood out for me as I made sense of my research conversations with Carmen given that Carmen and I were making sense of her experiences of working with hope and hoping in a faith-based school.

computer. The table of contents proved to be an invaluable tool to the very end of my writing and reflecting.

Although l encouraged Sheila and Carmen to create representations of their observations over the time we worked together, they did not share their representations with me. They did create hope trees and a hope scavenger hunt activity sheet in the first professional development session. Looking back, I remember asking them about their hope trees in our research conversations but neither Sheila nor Carmen had their hope tree with them.

Working with a response community.

Knowing how important it was to make sense of my experiences as a narrative inquirer, I continued to attend the weekly CRTED table conversations on Tuesdays between 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. whenever possible. After completing most of my coursework I met three to four times a month with Dr. Clandinin. Dr. Clandinin listened and responded to my stories, wonders, hopes, dreams, and fears. She shared stories of her experiences as a narrative inquirer and teacher educator during out time together. Whenever possible I continued to engage in conversations with my colleagues at the Hope Foundation of Alberta. During the year and a half that I worked alongside my participants, I also participated in the newly formed monthly Hope Research Discussion forum created by Dr. Larsen at the Hope Foundation with other researchers who were studying hope and hoping.

When I moved two and a half hours away from the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, I was not able to be at the weekly CRTED research table or monthly Hope Conversation group and my colleagues at the Hope Foundation of Alberta. Fortunately, I had a very supportive response community, which extended beyond the CRTED table and the Hope Foundation. My response community included my supervisory committee members, Dr. Clandinin (Jean), Dr. Larsen (Denise), Dr. Caine (Vera) and my colleagues Dr. Houle (Sonia) and Dr. Desrocher (Claire). I was fortunate that each of these individuals made the time to continue to meet with me from a distance on Skype when I moved out of the city. My response community listened to my stories, told and retold stories of their own, wondered with me, and read my dissertation along the way as a way of sensemaking with me.

On those days when I met with or talked to Dr. Clandinin, Dr. Larsen, Dr. Caine, Dr. Houle, and Dr. Desrocher I felt like the CRTED table moved with me. I say this because when we did meet, whether on Skype or in person when I travelled to the city, I felt the resonant remembering (Hoffman, 1994) of being "in a place where people are safe to <u>be</u> . . . a place . . . [where] attending to storied lives is first and foremost. . . [where] we are safe to talk about what matters to us. [Where] we <u>feel</u> others in their listening and response . . . the caring community that creates the nest so we can grow" (Steeves, 2000, p. 182–183).

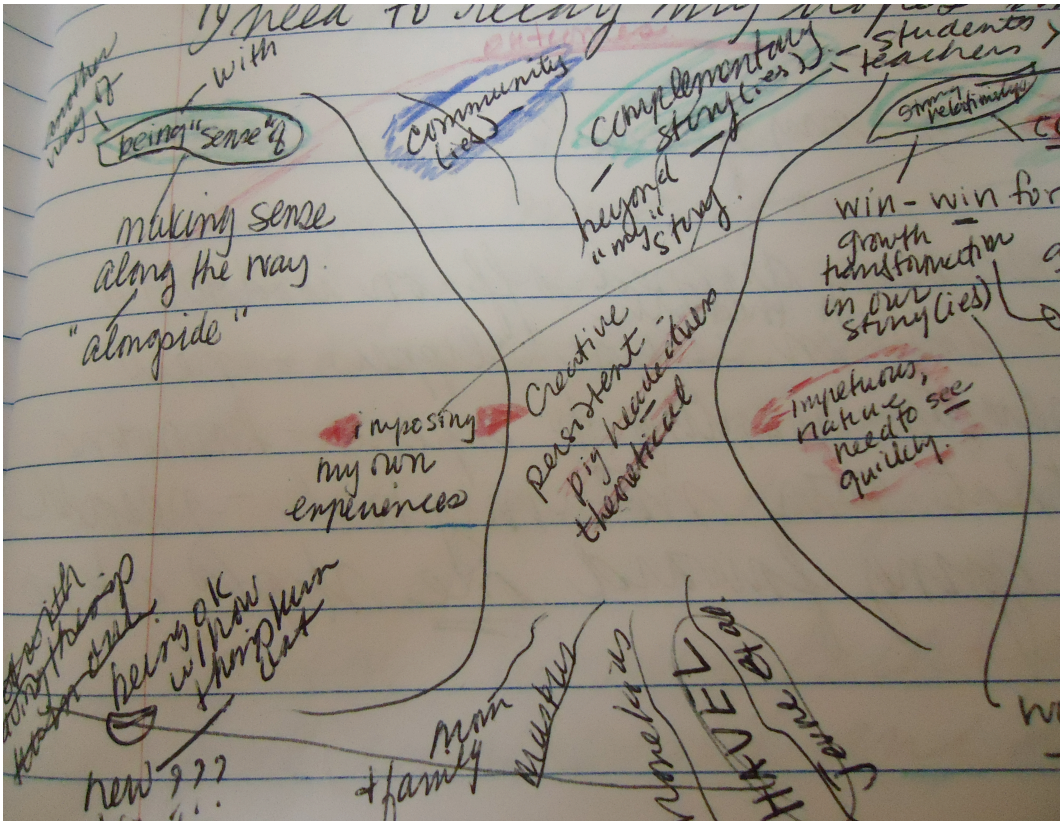
My response community provoked me to attend more closely to what I was learning as I laid my field texts alongside each other. My response community also

helped me "to articulate a relationship between [my] personal interests and sense of the significance and larger social concerns expressed in the works and lives of others" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 122).

Moving from field texts to interim and final research texts.

My response community helped me to make sense of my journal entries, field notes from professional development sessions and visits to my participants' classrooms as a participant observer, transcriptions from the audio recordings of our research conversations, and representations like the hope tree in Figure 3-1. I created the following hope tree on January 3, 2012 to help me stay awake to my hopes, dreams and fears of working alongside as I made sense of Sheila and Carmen's experiences.

Figure 3.1. Hope tree



I wrote in, around, and through the transcripts of our research conversations with different coloured pens and with "track changes" on the computer to attend to the commonplaces of narrative inquiry and as a way of balancing my voice with my participants' voice. Over time, I found myself working back and forth between Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts with my field texts as a way of maintaining my momentum forward. I started working with Sheila's narrative account because I received permission to work with her district first. By the time I met to negotiate my way forward with Carmen, I co-composed a first draft of Sheila's early years. I turned my attention to working, for the next few months, with Carmen's field texts. I worked back and forth between the field texts I created for Sheila and Carmen until I found myself experiencing a dilemma in my sensemaking. I describe the dilemma that I experienced as I co-composed Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts next.

Co-composing narrative accounts.

As I reflected on my experiences as an educator and researcher, and more specifically on experiences like the one I had with Margaret and Rachel, I knew I needed to co-compose narrative accounts with Sheila and Carmen as participants in the study. I knew I needed to physically write with participants, as my research study progressed, as a way of ensuring their voices and signatures were balanced with my meaning making as

we considered possible audiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In other words, I wanted to ensure that my participants were able to wonder alongside me as we attended to their ongoing experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

Building on MacIntyre's (1981) understanding of narrative unity, Connelly and Clandinin (2000) defined narrative unity as a "continuum within a person's experience which renders life experiences meaningful through the unity they achieve for the person" (p. 130). Connelly, Clandinin, and He's (1997) notion of narrative unity as "threads in people's lives that help account for the way in which they construct the stories that they live both in their personal lives and in their teaching" (p. 671) helped me stay awake to the various plotlines in Carmen and Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). For as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out "plotlines are continually revised as consultation takes place over written materials, and as further field texts are composed to develop points of importance in the revised story" (p. 132).

Reimagining my way forward.

I began this research study believing my participants and I would co-compose three accounts describing the three phases over a year and a half. However, I realized shortly after writing what I thought was the first account for each participant that it was impossible to attend, in any way, to the stories that shaped who they were and were becoming by fragmenting their lives into three phases. Instead, I attended to my field texts as they evolved between January 2012 and July 2013, to help me interpret and make

sense with my participants as they lived, told, retold, and relived stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) in relation to their experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). I named the accounts narrative accounts (Connelly & Claninin, 1988) because they were held together by narrative threads that stretched back to their early life stories and, in some cases, to family events before they were born.[37]

When I found myself unable to move from the first narrative account to the second narrative account for Carmen, Dr. Clandinin discussed the idea of working with word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) with me. The idea of working with word images made sense to me as a narrative inquirer since as a methodology, narrative inquiry's roots were nourished by the notion of attending to the images that coalesce in experience over time (Clandinin, 1986). Our conversations about word images inspired me to returned to some of my earlier course work to help me connect my own experiences of working with images with the theoretical underpinnings of Clandinin's work with images in narrative inquiry.

Through a careful accounting of Clandinin's experiences as a school counselor and then through participant observation and interviews with two teachers, Clandinin (1986) constructed, and helped to move forward an experiential concept of knowledge as embodied in persons, embedded in culture, and based on narrative unity. In so doing, Clandinin demonstrated how one's personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) is a coalescence of images that are unified through the inherent tensions that exist

[37] I talk more about this in each of my participants' narrative accounts and especially in Carmen's when I add roots to the hope tree I created for her in Chapter Five.

between theory versus practice; the personal versus practical; emotion versus morality; the past, present, and future verbal accounts versus actions; and a researcher's accounting versus a teachers' accounting of experience. Clandinin used Dewey's (1938) work on experience to understand how personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) is maintained by the harmonious interactions that energies bear on one another between the personal and practical knowledge that are kept in balance by the inherent tensions that exist within knowing.

When Dr. Clandinin suggested to me, 26 years after publishing her initial work with images, that I use word images, I found the word images provided me with structure. The structure provided by the word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) enabled me to attend to the inherent messiness of co-attending with Carmen to the narrative inquiry commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My work with word images reminded me of my work with photographs in my master's thesis (LeMay, 2002). In other words, I took special care to heed Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) assertion that it is important to attend to images as embodied, embedded in a culture or cultures, and based on narrative unity (MacIntyre, 1981) as I interpreted and co-composed Carmen and Sheila's narrative accounts.

Looking across narrative accounts for resonances.

When it came time to write my looking across chapter seven I took out the 11 x 18 inch sheets of paper once again. Over time I noticed the outline of Venn diagrams

forming on each of the sheets lying across the dining room table. When I heard my husband, Bart, say, "You always end up creating images," as he walked by, I paused to consider his story of me.

I travelled back to the morning he told me that he did not think I could be both the character education teacher and Hope Kids Manager as he sat beside me with tears streaming down my face at the breakfast table. Thinking about that moment, I travelled back further still to how he reacted when he heard that I was considering leaving the classroom to become the Hope Kids Manager. Looking back now, I believe that although he did not understand why I needed to leave a profession that was 'all about hope', he understood tacitly (Polanyi, 1958), given what he knew from living alongside me that I needed to find another place to be and become before I lost my sense of self altogether.

As I remembered these stories alongside Bart's comment that I always end up creating images to help me move forward, I thought about how I connected with my hoping self (Larsen & Larsen, 2004) with the help of photographic journaling in my master's thesis (LeMay, 2002). I thought about how representations helped me to work with Carlyle collages as a doctoral student so as to connect with knowing that I could not articulate or write about until I created images from which to understand and in some cases go forward in life sustaining ways. I thought about how I worked with concept maps to help me make sense of Sheila's narrative account and word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) to help me to make sense of Carmen's narrative account over time as I attended to the commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000) as we co-composed their narrative accounts and as I looked across their narrative accounts. Like Ely (2007), I believe "that representation has at least a double-edged meaning: (1) the rhetorical forms we use in our efforts (2) to re-present, evoke, and discuss what we have lived and learned in doing narrative research. This business of creating forms that come closest to the essence of our understandings and presenting them in trustworthy ways is crucial, ongoing, interactive dance" (p. 568).

Thinking about my experiences and what felt very much like an ongoing interactive dance, I recalled denying early life stories about *my creative side*—especially after my junior high school art teacher laughed at my pencil drawings. That is, until I began to work alongside Hope Kids to make our hope visible and accessible in our interactions. As I sat with this new knowing, I pondered how the plotline of "being creative and open to possibilities" sustained who I was and was becoming as a hope-focused practitioner who embraced a Deweyan-inspired narrative way of being with hope and hoping in the same way that I thought about Sheila and Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices. I decided it was time to look across their narrative accounts in search of resonant narrative threads to help me make sense of what I learned from our interactions over the last year and a half. After doing that I attended to the narrative threads that surfaced in Chapter 6 in relation to the personal, practical and social justifications for my research puzzle in Chapter 7.

Chapter Four: Narrative Account of Sheila

Prologue

I worked with teachers in Sheila's school district for six years in a variety of different ways. When I met Sheila I had secured a grant for teachers to attend three professional development sessions at the Hope Foundation. I invited teachers each year to participate in our ongoing collaborative professional development sessions. Over the six years teachers from different schools joined the group. Two of the teachers participated in the collaborative professional development sessions for three years, which meant that they acted as mentors to new teachers who were interested in learning about working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

Meeting Sheila

I heard about Sheila before I met her. Her principal told me she would be the perfect staff member to participate in the ongoing, collaborative professional development hope-focused sessions. As I listened to stories of Sheila told by the principal, I learned that Sheila was the principal designate[38] and that she was very involved with the character education[39] program at Grafton School.

The day we met in October 2010 there were eight teachers sitting in the chairs and couches in the living room of Hope House.[40] It was the first of three all-day professional

[38] The principal designate in Sheila's district fills in when the principal is away from the school.
[39] Character education in Sheila's district at that time centred on a particular set of individual virtues.
[40] Hope House was the home on the University of Alberta campus where the Hope Foundation was located at the beginning of my study.

development sessions in Sheila's school district.[41] As a way of beginning, I asked teachers to introduce themselves and say what brought them to the session. When Sheila introduced herself she told us that she did not have a reason for joining us since she only found out, the day before, that she was attending this session. Sheila explained that while her principal thought she had mentioned it to Sheila, she had not. Sheila was quick to add, "It was just a little miscommunication. Whatever, I am here now and that is what matters." We proceeded around the circle, and then into discussing how the teachers might work with hope-focused practices when they returned to their classrooms.

We met for our second professional development session in the classroom of one of the teachers. After we settled around the circle, I suggested we start the session by making Carlyle collages. I shared how I created Carlyle collages in the past as a reflection tool. I shared with the teachers that I first worked with Carlyle collages in a Grade 5 classroom before working at the Hope Foundation. I told them that the students and I spent a week creating our Carlyle pictures. The first day we sponged construction paper with paint. The second day we cut out shapes. On the third and fourth days, we arranged the cut out shapes into an image. I explained that the images evolved as the students placed the shapes, one at a time on the white background. On the fifth day we shared whatever came to mind as we reflected on both the process of creating the Carlyle collages and the image that surfaced over the three to four days. I explained to the teachers that it might take awhile for them to cut out their first image but I was confident,

[41] Teachers' release time for these sessions were paid out of their school's budget. My time was paid for by fundraising initiatives at the Hope Foundation of Alberta.

given my previous experiences that everyone would have an image to reflect on before our first break for the morning. Then I began creating my own collage, watching to see how the teachers were handling the silence that I asked we honour.

Later, when it was Sheila's turn to share her experience of creating her Carlyle collage, she told us that at first she thought about all the things she needed to be doing back at the school instead of wasting her time making a collage. However, as she continued she felt herself enjoying the process. She shared that long forgotten stories came to mind as she reflected on the 7 C's of hope template to make sense of her image. She shared some of these stories. At the end of the morning, I heard Sheila wondering, out loud, if there might be a way to use the hope-focused practices to pull together the many initiatives at her school.

We did not have a chance to talk until our third professional development session in January 2011. Sheila offered to host this session at her school. Walking into the library on that January day I saw that she had arranged a cozy corner for us, replete with refreshments arranged on a tablecloth covering a bookshelf. I expected the principal to join us as the morning progressed because she had been at the first professional development session in the fall at Hope House. When the principal did stop in to the library, just before the end of our time together, she assured us that she supported our work. Thinking back to my very first telephone conversation with her, I realized that her short visit with us on that January day signaled to me that Sheila was the liaison for

Grafton[42]. After the principal left we decided we would meet next at another teacher's school at the beginning of May. Sheila said that she might be a little late given that she would be driving across the city.

When Sheila walked through the door before our fourth session in May 2011 began, I remembered how her principal had storied her as "very reliable." As we listened to how Sheila envisioned her upcoming in-class hope project unfolding, other stories from Sheila's principal about Sheila being an innovator came to mind. When we started to make plans for our next meeting on the first Tuesday of July 2011, Sheila reminded us of her upcoming wilderness-hiking trip. As I listened to describe her upcoming trip, I thought back to long ago summers when my childhood friend and her family went on a 2-week camping trip in August. Like those summers so long ago, I found myself preparing to feel abandoned once again on the one hand, and excited on the other as I recalled the many hours my childhood friend and I spent sharing stories about our summer adventures upon her return home. At that time I did not know if I would hear Sheila's hiking stories when she returned home, since I did not know whether or not she would be able to or want to continue participating in the hope-focused professional development sessions that I hoped would continue the next school year.

I smiled when I saw Sheila's name on the participant list for the first hope-focused professional development session in October 2011. I smiled because I remembered Sheila's stories about her principal signing her up for the professional

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[42] Grafton is a pseudonym.

development session in October 2010 without Sheila's knowledge. After we shared our hope trees with each other as a way of paying attention to our hopes and fears for the upcoming year, teachers new to the sessions shared what inspired them to join. Sheila and other teachers who were returning for the second and third year shared some of the ways they worked with hope-focused practices. They also shared what they hoped to do in the upcoming year with students in their classrooms. I did not have time to ask Sheila about her hiking trip.

Negotiating Our Way Forward as Participants

After receiving approval from the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board and CAPS from one of the school districts, I asked Dr. Clandinin to send out the invitation to invite teachers to participate in my research study. Three weeks later Dr. Clandinin emailed to let me know that a teacher had responded to my invitation to participate in my research study. When I heard it was Sheila who responded, I smiled thinking that I might finally hear about her hiking trip when we met to negotiate her participation in my study.

As a way of preparing myself and calming my nerves for my first meeting with Sheila on January 7, 2012, wherein she would decide whether or not she would participate as a participant in my research study, I set my copy of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*

beside me. Not long after I began, I wrote "I need to relay my hopes and fears," and then I proceeded to create the hope tree that I included in my methodology chapter.

On the morning of our scheduled first research conversation, I arrived at the coffee shop half an hour early. I reviewed both the hope tree and my writing as I waited for Sheila to arrive. A few minutes after Sheila arrived, I felt myself relax as we settled into our chairs and started chatting about making time to enjoy a good cup of coffee, to exercise, read, and be with family—especially after the busyness of the Christmas season. Thankfully I remembered we had more to do than visit and catch up with each other before we finished our coffee.

After reading through and discussing the information letter and consent form, I shared my hopes of creating a space that enabled her to question and challenge how I interpreted my field notes of my experiences alongside her. I shared the hope tree I created earlier in the day. Sheila told me that she worried I might be disappointed since the majority of her work with the hope-focused practices was with school-wide initiatives and not so much with students in her classroom. I reassured her that I was interested in how she made sense of the hope-focused practices in her professional and personal life, inside and outside the classroom. I heard myself laugh out loud when Sheila smiled and said, "Well, then we will help each other to make sense of the bits and pieces" (Field Notes, January 8, 2012).

I laughed because I remember saying the same thing to myself after reading the preface in Emily Carr's journal (1966) as I wrote my autobiographical narrative inquiry

(LeMay, 2002). When I read the following journal entry to Sheila a few weeks later, during our first research conversation, Sheila responded with, "So true." Then she laughed and added in a very quiet voice, "Oh interesting. Neat."

> Why call this manuscript Hundreds and Thousands? Because it is made up of scraps of nothing . . . . what otherwise might have been a drab life sucked away without the crunch. . . . these tiny things that, collectively, taught me how to live. . . . the little scraps and nothingnesses of my life have made a definite pattern. (Carr, 1966, p. v)

Her response helped me relax a little more, for it signaled to me that perhaps we might begin imagining the "bits and pieces" from her life story informing her narrative account.

As I listened to Sheila's early life stories of playing ball as a youth at Grafton, since she lived in a neighbouring community and of choosing later to leave the downtown core of the city where she lived with her husband, to return to a community close to Grafton to raise their three children, I thought about my choice, 35 years ago, to teach in the city and not in my hometown. As I thought back to the summer I made the decision to accept a teaching position two and a half hours away from my childhood home, I felt the sadness I felt back then, wash over me once again. I wondered how things would have been different had I chosen to return to my hometown to live and teach closer to where I grew up as a child. I tried to imagine what it would be like to return to live by the lake since that was what my husband and I were contemplating. As I continued to listen to Sheila's stories of spending time with her children and their families who live

close to her, I felt Sheila's happiness wash over me. Spending time with her grandchildren and children and their spouses helped me to imagine what retirement might be like for us. However, I also thought about how, in those moments of being alongside and in conversation with Sheila, that Sheila loved being a teacher and I loved being a teacher educator and researcher.

After finishing the first draft of Sheila's interim narrative account, I arranged a meeting with her. While I waited for her to arrive so that I could share how I interpreted her early life stories and experiences of working with the hope-focused practices I wrote the following in my journal:

> Today I meet with Sheila for our second research conversation. I am just as nervous as I was the first time. I am hoping we can make sense of her professional development experiences in relation to her life story. However, there is so much happening on the school and district landscape that we will want to discuss. Her principal retired this year. In addition to this, I heard that her district put out a decree that professional development must happen outside of school hours from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. As a group we have been talking about establishing a teacher steering committee from a variety of districts to carry our work forward. After a year of intentionally writing and inquiring into the hope-focused practice of reflection we now think of it as a narrative reflective practice (Clandinin, Cave, & Cave, 2011). As I reflect on these developments in relation to Sheila's first narrative account and my curriculum as plan for our third

professional session in a month and a half, I wonder how we might use narrative reflective practice to help us stay awake to the commonplaces of narrative inquiry in Sheila's life story as she makes sense of the hope-focused practices at this time. Perhaps we can talk about keeping hope folios in our conversation today. (Journal Entry, April 9, 2012)

When Sheila arrived and after we got our coffee, I read through the interim narrative account, stopping every few minutes to ask if I was on track, keeping in mind the questions like "Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when read by others?" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Getting through 30 pages took us a very long time. When it came time to transcribe our conversation I found myself using "insert a comment" from Microsoft Word into the narrative account that I read to Sheila as a way of tracking our meaning making. Shortly thereafter, I sat down to begin what I thought at the time was her second interim narrative account, given how I imagined my research unfolding since we had, by then, met for our second professional development session.

Not wanting to lose sight of Sheila as a whole person, I set aside my most recent interim narrative account and went back to my field texts to re-search with a blank sheet of paper by my side. With pencil in hand I started jotting down words and connected them to bits and pieces from our conversations, my field notes, and journal entries. Over time I had a series of maps with snippets of what I imagined as Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) from my journal entries, field notes and the transcriptions

of our research conversations with which to continue the iterative process of making sense of who she was and was becoming as she worked with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

I started with the stories Sheila shared about her early years. We carried her narrative forward by attending to the plotlines that surfaced in the field texts that I created over the following year and a half. However, before presenting Sheila's experience of working with hope-focused practices, I have provided a chronological description of the times we met and the story of coming to Sheila's narrative account that evolved as a result of our sensemaking and interactions over the year and a half, after she agreed to participate in my research study.

Leading Up to a Narrative Account for Sheila

January 7, 2012 - We met to negotiate Sheila becoming a participant in study.

January 19, 2012 - I spent the afternoon as a participant observer with Sheila and her students.

January 24, 2012 - Sheila and I met for our first research conversation.

February 15, 2012 - Sheila joined her colleagues and myself at the Hope Foundation for our second professional development session of the year.[43] We sat around the table in the basement of Hope House. We shared stories of our experiences of working with hope-focused practices at this session. The teachers chose to spend this

[43] We met in October of 2011 for our first professional development session. However, since this was before the start date for my research, I relied on my memory and the few notes and journal entries that I made as the facilitator from that session when interpreting my field texts for this study.

whole session sharing stories and ideas with each other instead of creating Carlyle collages, as per my plans, given that they were in the middle of preparing report cards for the upcoming parent teacher conferences.

April 9, 2012 - Second research conversation. We met at Sheila's favourite coffee shop on a Sunday afternoon. After we settled in alongside each other in the armchairs around the coffee table, I shared a draft of what I thought would be her first narrative account.

June 5, 2012 - Second participant observer visit to Sheila's classroom.

July 3, 2012 - Third research conversation, again at Sheila's favourite coffee shop. We chose to sit at a table away from the speakers with music playing this time in the hopes of being able to hear each other better.

August 24, 2012 - Visit to Sheila's classroom to help her prepare for the upcoming school year.

October 28, 2012 - Volunteered in Sheila's classroom.

November 26, 2012 - Fourth research conversation.

February 6, 2013 - Scheduled third professional development session with Sheila's colleagues. However, because other participants were unable to attend, Sheila and I had our fifth research conversation.

April 27, 2013 - Date I shared this final narrative account with Sheila.

The following narrative account represents my interpretation, alongside Sheila, as we made sense of her experiences of working with hope-focused practices for now.

Sheila's Early Years

Sheila grew up in a well-established part of the city, alongside first and second generation European Canadians. She described her early family life as comfortable compared to others in her neighbourhood. When I asked Sheila to tell me more she explained that although her family did not have money for extras, she and her brother were encouraged to develop other interests. Sheila put it this way:

> Our family did not have money for piano lessons or hockey. We were comfortable for our neighbourhood but we did not have a lot of extras. Compared to our neighbourhood we kind of did. I see that now. I think it is funny because we used to travel as kids in our tent. My mom and dad would pack up and off we would go for two weeks to Birch Lake. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

Hearing how she and her family holidayed for two weeks in the summer in their tent reminded me of my childhood summers. Unlike Sheila, my camping experiences were in my friends' back yards. And, unlike Sheila who continues to live her stories of camping, I romanticize being on wilderness adventures and camping trips like the ones Sheila takes with her husband and family. I say this because I remember imagining myself going straight home to take the tent that my husband and I used to camp with out of the garage sale bin as I listened to her say:

> My husband I still tent. We have a tiny little tent. We just love going in our tent. . . . I like to sit outside and do nothing or go for a walk. . . . We usually have a weekend where my all my children and their families get together to camp in tents during the summer. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

It seems that Sheila's stories of camping with her parents and then her adventures with her husband and children in the early years of their family life blossomed into a greater love when her husband worked out of country. Although the opportunity to live with her husband was always available to Sheila and their children, she chose to visit him instead. She visited when their children were not in school because as Sheila explained it, she was not comfortable taking her children out of school, given their ages at that time. So for 12 years Sheila substitute taught. Substitute teaching made it possible for her to pack up and go quickly to be with her husband for two or six weeks, during the summer, or as she said, "To do whatever I needed to do" (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012).

In a later research conversation Sheila recounted the story of both being available and living in the moment when she said, "That was a perfect way to be because if they needed something or if I wanted to stay home – my husband used to work out of the country, we could just go" (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012). Her recounting reminded me of her response when I asked why she did not choose to live with her husband when he worked abroad. She said, "I stayed because it wasn't a good time to go for the kids . . . .They were in hockey and figure skating . . . They were in junior high and

that just did not feel like a good time to take them" (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012).

During this time, Sheila volunteered in her children's classrooms as a parent helper during the day and transported her children to and from hockey and figure skating in the evening and on weekends. Substitute teaching enabled her to be the president of her daughter's figure skating club and a Brownie Leader. Since returning to the classroom, Sheila chose to teach in three school communities close to the home that she has always lived in, first with her husband and children and now with her husband and grandchildren on the weekends when they stay over.

As I puzzled over Sheila's early life stories, her stories of being a young mother, wife, traveler, camper, substitute teacher, Brown Owl, President, and later a full-time classroom teacher who chose to teach in three lower socio-economic schools over the last 20 years, I stayed awake to the plotlines that surfaced as Sheila and I made sense of her experiences of working with hope-focused practices in her curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

Emerging Plotlines

Two and sometimes a third plotline emerged in the many interim research texts that I wrote shortly after the first phase of my research study with Sheila as my participant. The first two plotlines emerged sometime after our third research conversation on July 3, 2012. Whenever I attempted to write about what felt like a third

plotline, I felt it slipping away from the page. I found myself leaving the bits and pieces of field texts scattered without anything holding them together at the end of Sheila's narrative account. It was not until after our last research conversation on February 6, 2013 that I felt the third plotline taking shape in Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

I settled on two plotlines with the outlines of a third one only beginning to gel as I interpreted Sheila's experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay, et al., 2008). Therefore, the two plotlines I settled on were: responding responsibly to expectations and attending to possibilities in relationship. Because the third plotline exists like a shadow hovering within, I took the liberty to name it "inspiration comes with intention" from what I could pull together at the time. However, I did not give it the same status as the first two plotlines since I did not unpack it as fully as I did the first two plotlines. Instead, I placed it within Sheila's narrative account with a heightened tentativeness given that it's outlines and shape were only beginning to make themselves visible in Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as I finished her narrative account.

Although I wrote about each of the two plotlines that I felt resonated strongly in her stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) separately, the two plotlines do not act independently of each other (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In fact, they informed and interacted with each other in the "multidimensional,

ever changing life space" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 481) in her life stories. With that in mind, I turn next to unpack the plotline of responding responsibly to expectations.

Plotlines in Sheila's Narrative Account

Plotline 1: Responding responsibly to expectations.

The first plotline that I noticed in the stories she and others told was her stated passion for character education. Like her principal, Sheila made many references to character education. I wrote the next field text, which I called a found poem[44] (Richardson, 1994). In creating this found poem I took words and phrases from a journal entry that I wrote following the 2011 professional development session.

Last year
learned a lot.
Had not
thought about this way
of working with hope before.
Incorporated into character education,
anti-bullying, and
service-learning,
part of social studies –
the 7 C's of hope.

Did not know I was
attending a workshop on hope
until the day before
when my principal told me.
I think that is

[44] Richardson (1994) used only words of research participants to create a poetic rendition of participants' stories or phenomenon from research interviews to "recreate lived experience and evoke emotional responses" (p. 521).

Because I am so involved
with school-wide initiatives.

We did hope in our monthly school-wide themes.
I worked with a Grade 3 teacher to incorporate
this way of working with hope into social studies curriculum.
We asked, "How does each agency fulfill the 7 C's of hope?"

When I wrote the journal entry I did not know Sheila would be a participant. I wrote the found poem on March 15, 2012 as a way to represent how I perceived Sheila storied her experiences of her first year of being in the ongoing hope-focused professional development sessions

Four months later after Sheila and I met to negotiate our work together to make sense of her experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) on January 7, 2012, I wrote the following field note to describe my first experience as I visited Sheila's classroom as a participant observer.

> I sat down at the Circle of Friends Table that had a puzzle of world flags on the bulletin board behind it with the heading We Can Make a Difference . . . . I remembered Sheila saying that I might see more 'in the school' than her classroom because she and students are responsible for school-wide family group activities. (Field Notes, January 19, 2012)

As I was leaving Grafton, Sheila insisted that we stop at the gymnasium to see the character education posters on the wall and to see another bulletin board near to the school office where more posters were displayed. Five days later, when Sheila and I met

for our first research conversation, Sheila said, "We are working very hard to build character traits" (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012).

I knew Sheila as the character education lead at Grafton. However, I was taken by surprise when she told me she was a rule follower and that she learned to be a rule follower in her interactions with her parents and later in her interactions with others, like her husband. Sheila put it this way:

> My parents are both the kind of people who are certainly not perfect, but they are rule followers. I have always been a rule follower. There are rules and you follow them. That is the way it is. You know sometimes my husband and I will jaywalk and my husband will say, "I can't believe you are jaywalking," and I will say, "Neither can I. I know it is so stupid." That is the way I was brought up. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

Later, in the second professional development session, when Sheila told the group that her Grade 6 students patrol at recess in search of students following the rules (Field Notes, February 15, 2012), I was still trying to make sense of Sheila's story of herself as a rule follower. As a way of interpreting her stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) in relation to my interactions with her over a year and a half, I placed both Sheila's story of following the rules and her story of encouraging her students to "search for rule followers" alongside each other in the first interim narrative account. In our second research conversation when I shared that first research interim text with Sheila, she explained:

> I don't know that I see the rules as hard and fast. Maybe we need to lighten up on the rules to be followed. . . . . The rules are sounding black and white here, whereas in the real world they don't work that way. There are certain ways for things to be done in order for us to move on. . . . To be successful in school you need to be there every day. (Research Conversation, April 9, 2012)

I tentatively suggested we replace rules with the word expectations, since I heard her use that word in our first research conversation. Sheila quickly responded with:

> Yes, so maybe the rules that we are talking about are more like expectations. It would be the same in my classroom. The kids know what the expectations are. . . Do we sit down at the beginning of the year and make a long list of rules? No, we make a list of expectations of what we would like to see. (Research Conversation, April 9, 2012)

Sheila's quick response to my suggestion led me to question what being the school leader in character education meant to her. I realized I needed to pay much closer attention to what being the lead in character education looked like in relation to following the rules in Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). With that in my mind, we talked about the importance of being taught the expectations in a way that encouraged being responsible for our actions. In our third research conversation (July 3, 2012) as we told stories about our parents encouraging us to work with, and within, a set of unnamed expectations, Sheila relayed how her parents trusted her to travel downtown on the bus by herself when she was a teenager. Although neither of us voiced these

feelings, it seemed that we felt a lot of gratitude for our parents' ways of raising us to live up to their expectations. We talked about not beginning the year with a long list of rules but with a set of expectations instead. As we talked on April 9, 2012, I remembered how Sheila storied herself in our January 24, 2012 conversation as helping students build character traits when she said:

> Some of the kids do not come from a great place and so they need to learn how to let that go and make a decision that works for them or that improves their being if that makes any sense. I think we work on that bit-by-bit, trying to let them see that they can help each other . . . . So if you do not teach them some alternatives and some other things to do they might get stuck in that rut and not be able to break out of it. We are working very hard to build those character traits that really focus on being respectful and polite at school; teaching them what the expectations are. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

As Sheila made sense of how she learned the importance of learning, and knowing how to follow the rules from a very early age, I heard her express what felt like concern and responsibility for students whose parents were also learning the expectations of being new Canadians. Sheila's parents provided Sheila with a way of being that enabled her to feel safe and courageous when she ventured downtown on the bus. I sensed that as a second generation Canadian, Sheila was encouraged to explore outside her neighbourhood because her parents both knew the rules and trusted that she would follow the rules when she ventured outside the neighbourhood. I felt there was a

connection between Sheila's early stories of learning the expectations and being a rule follower in relation to how she worked with character education at Grafton—especially since a number of the students are first generation Canadians.

Because this was my interpretation, in our fourth research conversation (November 26, 2012) I asked Sheila about the phrase "being a good citizen" since that phrase surfaced repeatedly in the interim texts that I created as I was making sense of her understanding of character education and being aware of expectations. When I asked her if being a good citizen was a phrase she might use, she responded with:

> I think I would have been more successful in things had I known sooner where I was going. So knowing where you are going—that productive piece because I see citizenship as everybody having a job to do or everyone contributing in their own ways like you would contribute to society in a completely different way from someone else. . . . Rather than just going through life and just stumbling over things as they come but being prepared and ready and able to do something to the best of your ability. (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012)

A little later she outlined in more detail how she made sense of her experiences of applying for leadership positions in relation to not knowing the expectations.

> I found it really discouraging to go have an interview and then not get it. I was not always sure, was that what I really wanted? . . . Sometimes I just think that you need to find the happiness where you are at and if I really needed a change, it would be different . . . . I think that if I had been more aware of goal setting . . .

> because there were some things that I would have liked to have done. . . . If I really wanted to pursue something in leadership, I needed to move more. (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012)

As Sheila told stories about not being chosen for a leadership positions in the district because, as she put it, she did not teach in a variety of socio-economic schools, I remembered the many references she made in her stories about being comfortable. As I thought back to those stories I was drawn to reflect more deeply on her comment, "Sometimes I just think that you need to find the happiness where you are at." As I wondered about "finding happiness where you are," I thought back to when she shared how her family did not have money for extras but were comfortable compared to their neighbours. I thought also about how she chose to visit her husband instead of uprooting her children from their schools and disrupting their comfort. However, since Sheila said things might have turned out differently 'had she been more aware of goal setting' (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012) when she applied for the leadership positions, I wondered how her stories of working with character education connected to her stories of goal setting and hope. With that wonder in mind, I describe how our sense making about goals, hope, and character education unfolded.

In our third research conversation (July 3, 2012) I asked Sheila if she had any stories about working with any of the hope-focused practices. She shared her view of using hope as a catalyst for setting more concrete goals in personally responsible and empowering ways. She put it this way:

> I think probably the thing I really focused on was maybe creating more hopeful language and pushing kids to think about where they want to go. . . . So they had hopes and they got the hope part because I talked a lot about hope but we also made it more specific. . . . Like you just can't hope, like you can't hope that you will win a million dollars. I mean if you want to win a million dollars you have to do something to get there . . . . The previous year we did a lot of stuff with hope quotes and I felt like our kids didn't really understand what hope was. (Research Conversation, July 3, 2012)

As Sheila talked about using hope conversations as a goal setting catalyst, I remembered being in her classroom on the rainy morning of June 5, 2012 as a participant observer. I watched as students settled in with their journals to begin their day as Sheila checked through their agendas and instructed students to write down their goals for the day. I thought about that June morning, when, in our third research conversation (July 3, 2012), Sheila storied how she might work with goals at the beginning of the next school year. She said:

> I am going to continue that next year in a slightly different way. The students' hope tree could be related to their goals. We could start with their hopes on the leaves and make the goals specific to get there. (Research Conversation, July 3, 2012)

Later, when I helped her prepare her classroom before students returned from the summer break, Sheila talked about her trip to visit a friend in a small rural community.

Although Sheila was not a shopper, her friend was. She told of how, on their shopping excursion, she took the time to search out things that she could use in her classroom. Remembering how I loved bringing in new supplies to signal the beginning of the school year, I kept glancing at the bag sitting on Sheila's desk. Finally Sheila asked if I wanted to see what she purchased. Before I could reply, she pulled out nametags and stickers. She pulled out a picture book. Flipping through the book she added that she thought she might use the picture book to introduce and teach students goal setting behaviors. To do this she imagined having students name something they would like to be grateful for and then how they might move toward that goal.

As she storied herself forward, I thought back to our first research conversation on January 24, 2012 when Sheila shared how she noticed her students were more appreciative after making hope more explicit in their conversations in relation to the free tickets they received for a theatre production. Sheila storied her students' acknowledging, in their thank you letters to the benefactors, that the theatre experience was good for their futures. As she shared this she wondered out loud if there was a connection between the students recognizing that the ticket benefactors were responsible for the feelings of hope for their future and the fact that these same students thanked her for teaching them as they walked out the door at the end of the school day. I remembered her wondering how naming something they would like to be grateful for might make it easier for students who have difficulty with setting and attaining goals back in January 2012. I blurted out that not everyone is comfortable with setting goals. As I reflected

back on all of this, I told her in our August 2012 conversation about the teacher who explained that it was after a year of making hope explicit in her interactions with students, that her students were able to set goals for themselves. Sheila responded, "Well don't your goals drive your hopes?" Her wonder prompted me to rethink the connection I was making between hope and goals—not in a way that I could articulate as easily as Sheila, but in a way that at least allowed me to consider them working together. I wrote, "Sheila has much to teach me about the relationship between goals and hope. I need to stay open to what I can learn from our conversations" (Field Note, August 24, 2012).

As I reflected on Sheila's early life experiences alongside her experiences in Brownies[45] alongside her stories of herself as the character education lead at Grafton in a school district with a framework for implementing character education, I remembered her saying, "I feel like a lot of the great character education stuff has come from the experiences that I have had and been able to share with people. And then we change it to fit with what everyone else would like to do and what the kids would benefit from," (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012). Toward the end of our time together, Sheila shared the following story about being the character education lead at Grafton School.

> One year I didn't do character education . . . they tried something different and it didn't work . . . it is not something that you do once a month. It is something that is visited over and over and over again. . . They just didn't have a goal in mind. They were getting something done every month rather than a big picture –

[45] An out-of-school-worldwide program created to help girls of all backgrounds and of all abilities to develop self-reliance, resourcefulness, and active citizenship. Accessed from http://cheesecakeandfriends.com/troop1440/history.htm on December 12, 2012

something that pulled it all together for everybody so that everybody is on board. It makes a big difference. (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012)

As I thought about how Sheila used character education to help her students learn to follow expectations so as to set and achieve meaningful goals, I remembered my experiences as the character education teacher 12 years ago as I moved from teaching to the Hope Foundation. That was the morning I felt tears streaming down my face. I had anticipated hearing students call me the character education teacher as I walked into their classroom to provide 30-minute relief time for their classroom teacher. A week later I left the school landscape. Thinking back now, I realize that my experiences of working with one virtue per month were very different from Sheila's experiences of making meaningful connections through character education as a way of being.

As I reflected on how Sheila's stories were resonant with mine given that we experienced many of the same social influences growing up. I wondered how it was that Sheila managed to align and/or fit her way of being with character education in a way that enabled her to remain energized, inspired, and committed to find the happiness that feeds her way of being and becoming.

With that wonder in mind, I turn to the second plotline that surfaced as Sheila and I made sense of her stories moving temporally forward and backward, to different places and in relation to her hopes, dreams, wishes, and fears alongside broader social exigencies (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I named this second plotline attending to the possibilities in relationship. I believe this plotline, like the first one that evolved, will

continue to inform her being and becoming on and off the school landscape. I make this claim after reflecting on our conversation on February 6, 2013 when Sheila storied herself forward as she imagined taking a leave of absence to travel with her husband in the 2013–2014 school year.

Plotline 2: Attending to the possibilities in relationship.

Maintaining balance.

Hints of what I term the second plotline, attending to possibilities in relationship, emerged the first hour when we met to negotiate and sign the consent forms for Sheila to participate in the research. During that hour we discussed our shared need to exercise, to carve out time for ourselves, and to watch what we eat so that we do not end up with the sidewalk hitting our face[46] (LeMay & Edey, 2008) one day.

The day before I met Sheila for our first research conversation a few weeks later, I wrote the following entry in my journal on January 23, 2012.

> I am glad that we chose to meet in Sheila's classroom for our first research conversation and not a coffee shop. I arrive a little earlier in the hopes of being done before 6:30 p.m. so that Sheila can get home to dinner at a more decent time. I remember her saying she enjoyed having a half hour to read before supper one

[46] I often used this phrase during my research conversations with Sheila and Carmen since it was a phrase I heard in a study I participated in as the researcher to understand the experiences of teachers on extended disability who were a part of the Teacher Hope Initiative at the Hope Foundation. The teachers used this phrase to describe how they felt when they realized they could not return to the classroom for an extended period of time as a result of illness.

night in the not so distant past as a way to unwind after a busy school day. Sheila carves out spaces for herself to maintain her 'sense of balance'. I admire her ability to enjoy an extra large latte as a treat every once in awhile in the same way that she makes sure she visits the gym three times a week. (Journal Entry, January 23, 2012)

The next day, at our first research conversation, we talked again about the importance of balance as a way of keeping up with the increasing expectations of what it means to be a teacher inside and outside the classroom. Sheila told it this way:

I think balance is important. You can't just do your job all the time. Sometimes I feel like I should do more. I would love to do more. I have friends who do more but I just cannot. You know family needs to be important and you need to take time for yourself. I guess when you get older you kind of figure that out. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

While I agreed, I remembered rushing into the school for my visit after attending to a personal errand and seeing a car drive up on the sidewalk in a desperate attempt to miss me as I dashed out into the street without looking. Sheila interrupted my thinking:

Maybe you just realize that no matter how hard you work it never really gets done anyway . . . I do the things that I think are important. This year I really made a conscious effort to be not doing so many things out of the classroom. I used to be the principal designate and the year before I was the acting principal. I was called out of my classroom a lot. (First Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

Later in the conversation, I became aware of how Sheila wrestled with what she saw happening to her friends who, as she described it, did not have other interests and/or hobbies outside of the classroom or school.

> I am finding a lot of my teacher friends are leaving right now or taking sick leave. They are finding it a challenge. I really think it is all of the expectations and the struggle of finding balance. Maybe that is part of the reason I am so—I refuse to feel guilty if I cannot get all the paperwork done. I think it is a shame. One of my friends left teaching and said she would never teach again. She is actually one of the best teachers I have ever seen. She is absolutely an amazing teacher but maybe she did too much. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

As I listened to Sheila, I felt her concern. Like Sheila, I also worry about my colleagues and for education in general as we cope with the increasing *expectations* funneling down the conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) on to the professional knowledge landscape.[47] I began to wonder how Sheila managed to sustain herself while other teachers, like myself, chose to leave the classroom as a way of surviving. As I worked at making sense of Sheila's friend's choice to leave teaching, I noticed what appeared to be a dilemma for Sheila as she pondered her experiences of balancing the increasing policy demands with the demands of the program of studies alongside her students' curiosities. I first became aware of this dilemma in Sheila's stories during my

[47] Clandinin and Connelly (1995) posit that untethered abstract theory funneling down the conduit via the professional knowledge landscape, without human presence or context, presents epistemological dilemmas for teachers.

first visit to her classroom as a participant observer. I wrote the following field note during my visit.

> Our conversation, over recess, started out with the policies that get in the way of enjoying teaching at times and moved quickly to how difficult it is to get everything covered in their allotted times . . . . When all the students left, Sheila came to the back of the room saying that this group of students would spend the whole day asking questions. (Field Notes, January 19, 2012)

In our fourth research conversation (November 26, 2012), as Sheila shared her stories of applying for administrative positions, I remembered comments she made the day she walked out of the professional development session in our first year after making her Carlyle collage. She said, "So many initiatives in our school could be pulled together and it would be so much more meaningful for students." When I reminded her of that comment as we talked in our fourth research conversation, she explained:

> It is hard to work in a school where there is such an emphasis on results. . . . our school does terrible on results reviews. . . . I don't know how other schools get around it. . . . I do what I am told . . . I can feel that I am getting really tense because there are eight million things to do . . . . I think with our new administration that things are much smoother . . . .I've learned to do things easier. We've done a lot of journaling . . . . it's really easy to turn to a journal to include something. . . . I would love to do everything in a journal . . . . but that doesn't

make sense . . . . I cannot get them back fast enough so we have a lot of journals going. (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012)

When I asked, "Perhaps there is a little dilemma here?" Sheila responded with, "I refuse to feel guilty." I remembered hearing the same resolve back in our first research conversation when she said, "Sometimes I feel like I should do more. I would love to do more. I have friends who do more but I just cannot . . . . I guess when you get older you kind of figure it out (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012).

I thought about what I had written about the conversation where Sheila and I talked about the childhood Saturday rituals we developed in our early teen years (August 24, 2013). Mine was to go to the local theatre and Sheila's was to play outside. We talked about our mothers encouraging us to create interests outside the home on Saturday afternoons while they caught up with the busyness of their own lives without us underfoot. As a result, I became passionate about movies and Sheila learned to love exploring outside. As we thought back to those times, we realized that we learned about setting boundaries from our mothers. We agreed that it is a bit of a balancing act in that when we do not set boundaries we find ourselves having to abandon doing what nourishes our being and becoming. On the other hand, when we set boundaries we also risk the chance that someone will be offended. Sheila's story of telling people when she first got married that they had to check with her before dropping in for a visit gave me the courage to first imagine, and then tell others, that I appreciate being able to work until

3:00 p.m. every day without interruptions in my new home office in a community where most everyone I know is retired or semi-retired.

As I placed Sheila's stories of establishing boundaries as a way of maintaining the balance she needs to maintain her perspective, the image of a tight ropewalker came to mind. As I thought of Sheila walking the tightrope, I thought of an acrobat who has learned to balance her own needs with the needs of others as she maintains her balance. This way of being enables her to be both present and responsive to the demands inside and outside the classroom. As a disciplined acrobat Sheila paces herself so that she makes it to the finish line with energy to spare and new curiosities that inspire her next walk. Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) at this time and place in her life make me think about how she stays awake (Greene, 1995) and in touch with what she needs in the moment so as to be able to go forward with interest and energy.

Creating spaces to be in relationship.

Thinking about this, I remembered her stories, in our first research conversation on January 24, 2012, about a fellow traveler on her hiking trip who, in Sheila's words, almost ran the whole wilderness trail the past summer. Unlike her travelling companion, Sheila shared how she spent time with the guides, conversing and sharing stories with each other as they walked the trails. On a day that she was too tired to look at one more ruin, the guide suggested Sheila sit on a side of the hill with him as he prepared lunch instead of climbing up the hill to one more ruin.

Sheila shared how she took time to take in both the scenery and the contours of the land, step by step, as she climbed up and then down the narrow path on her latest wilderness trip. When the guide suggested she take a break from looking at yet another ruin, she heeded his advice. Sheila was not afraid of the long days and steep pathways but she was also aware that there were others around her who had travelled the path many times who could see when someone needed a break. She commented that she did not have to lead the group even though we both knew she could have pushed herself to do so. Instead she chose to go slow in order to take in and process what she was experiencing rather than pushing herself to reach the destination ahead of her travelling companions. It seemed that Sheila was grateful that the guides accompanying her group cared for each of the hikers' unique needs along the way, in the same way that I noticed she paid attention to her students' unique learning styles and needs as she interacted with them to encourage them to courageously experiment with Van Gogh's techniques on the afternoon I visited her classroom on January 19, 2012.

Sheila did not hurry her students to finish their art but suggested that she would schedule another afternoon for them to "play with Van Gogh's technique of creating movement." Later, when she invited students to share their phases of the moon representations as a way of checking on their understanding, she asked one of the students to come stand by her to look at what he had drawn on the board so that he could see it from her perspective as a way of checking in on his understanding. A few weeks

after my experience with Sheila and her students as a participant observer, I wrote the following in and around the margins of my field notes.

> I really felt that Sheila makes spaces for students so that they feel there is room for them to grow with her. This is not something I have ever seen or done before in my own teaching. Sheila created a space for the student to look from her position when she said, "Come stand by me. We can stand alongside." She was saying, in effect, my position is not one of privilege. There is room beside me for you to see from my perspective. This makes me think about Dewey's (1938) educative experiences. (Field Text, February 5, 2012)

I hoped that writing in the margins might help me make sense of what I saw and felt when I heard her invite the student to look from her place. When we talked more about her asking the student to look from her place in the classroom, after I composed a draft of her narrative account, Sheila responded with, "We know students will not learn if we just tell them the answer. Students need to try things out for themselves" (Research Conversation, April 9, 2012).

As I made sense of my writing in the margins, I remembered Sheila inviting me to look through the students' finished Van Gogh representations during our first research conversation on January 24, 2012. Captivated by the sense of movement and feeling in the students' art, I found myself thinking back to my field notes from my afternoon visit, where I wrote "she demonstrated with a plastic fork, knife, and toothbrush" (Field Notes, January 19, 2012) as a way of encouraging the students to play with Van Gogh's

technique to create a particular feeling or story in their artistic representations. As I thought about Sheila's invitation to play while the students experimented with Van Gogh's art form, I remembered feeling inspired in that moment in the same way that I felt inspired to be more adventurous in how we co-composed Sheila's narrative account so that we captured her playful and yet serious way of being in relationship.

These ponderings transported me back to the classroom as I watched Sheila debrief and pull together the strands of learning into the students' lives from the Van Gogh lesson as she wove her own wonders into the language arts lesson. Even before the students began experimenting with Van Gogh's movement techniques she wondered out loud how his paintings influenced people today, which prompted her "to do some research of her own" (Field Notes, January 19, 2012). When she played Don McLean's *Starry, Starry Night* on YouTube for the students, I was reminded of my high school social studies class where I was encouraged to think and wonder alongside Mr. Bently and my classmates (LeMay, 2002). I remember working on projects on Saturday evenings because I felt like I was playing. I did not see what I was doing as work. I remember the ebb and flow of ideas and wonders clashing inside and outside the classroom as I worked with my classmates on projects that infused a sense of life into learning as we made sense of our experiences alongside each other and Mr. Bentley.

Making meaningful connections.

Hearing Sheila's stories of working with journals as a way of inspiring her students to make meaningful connections also informed how I made sense of the second plotline of attending to possibilities in relationship. When I placed the following two excerpts from our research conversations on July 3, 2012 and November 26, 2012 alongside each other I thought back to how Sheila storied herself responding responsibly to expectations alongside her parents. In our third research conversation on July 3 she said:

> I do reflective journals every week and they aren't to write—they can write about what they did. They aren't supposed to just list what they did. They are supposed to—how did you feel, what would you change, you know, what did you learn and looking for hopeful kinds of messages in there. It was not super specific and maybe add in how did your week create hope for the future? You could add that and some of my girls would love that this year. Next year's group will not be as reflective because they are not as thoughtful as this year's group but they'll get there. They are younger too but we do reflective journals every week. (Research Conversation, July 3, 2012)

We talked about her experiences with journals again, when we met at the end of November 2012. Sheila mused:

> I would like to do everything in the journal, to use the same journal all day but that doesn't make sense because you like to hand them in. I can't get them back

> fast enough so we have a lot of journals going—different journals for different things . . . It is not a worksheet. It's from their heart or they are responding to something or who they are. (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012)

Reflecting further still, I remembered Sheila imagining at first and then storying her experiences of working with journals as a way of inspiring her students to attend more closely to who they were and were becoming by connecting their actions with their feelings. I also heard her trying to make sense of how she could balance using journals to support her students' learning on the one hand and wondering on the other how many journals she could read and respond to given the expectations coming down the metaphoric conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

Laying these field texts alongside each other helped me see what felt like a shift in her personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) expressed in her way of being in relation to using journals with her students. When I asked her to help me make sense of the shift that I noticed she said:

> When I heard Anne describing her work with hope journals in our professional development session—different ways of doing things appeal to me. One thing we do every week is home journals. Some students add personal hopes and dreams. The journals are a place where students can have goals and use hope to achieve goals. (Research Conversation, February 6, 2013)

As I listened to Sheila describe how Anne inspired her to use journals as a way for students to reflect on and pay attention to their hopes, dreams, and possibly even their

fears, I was not surprised to hear her say: "different ways of doing things appeal to me." I was not surprised given what I learned about her personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) over the last year. When I heard her say "different ways of doing things appeal to me" I remembered Sheila encouraging students to play and experiment with the tools she made available and with different techniques, as she demonstrated in the lesson on that day, as a way of learning along the way about what was possible.

With this in mind, I was happy to hear that it was listening to Anne's stories of working with journals and hope folios that inspired Sheila to consider working more with journals. I say this because I remember worrying during and after our second professional development session in February 2012 about how we spent our time together. I worried that all we did on that day was share stories of our experiences. I worried about how the teachers perceived my role as the facilitator when I asked if they would like to do the activity I had planned after the break or continue with sharing stories so they could leave a little earlier to get back to their report card writing. At the time, I thought they chose continuing to share their stories so they could leave earlier. I wrote the following entry in my journal:

> I walk a line between honouring the teachers' personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) and being the facilitator with some kind of 'different knowing'. . . . It seems I need to plan more tightly structured professional development sessions. My own tensions—finding ways for teachers

to create spaces for storytelling, goes back to my masters. (Journal Entry, February 19, 2012)

Hearing that Sheila was inspired by the stories she heard and perhaps told and retold, I went back to my field notes from that day and found this excerpt that I captured from Sheila's response to a query from one of the other teachers. Sheila said, "We shared the animoto from last year's delivery of cards in the neighbourhood" (Field Note, February 15, 2012). I was encouraged to read Sheila's response. I say this because Anne shared stories of using animotos with hope walks the year before Sheila became a research participant in my study. And so as I wrote this interim narrative account, almost a year and a half after Anne shared her animotos in our professional development sessions and read how Sheila gained the courage to shift her way of working with hope as a result, I have a new understanding of how she made sense of working with the hope-focused practice of narrative reflection (Clandinin et al., 2011).

Reflecting on this journal entry brought forward another conversation about Sheila's work with animotos. As I reread our research conversation I wondered about a possible tension in Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). The following transcript from our research conversation on July 3, 2012 after our second professional development session outlines Sheila's experiences of working with animotos after hearing Anne's stories of working with animotos as a way of sharing students' learning from their neighbourhood hope walks.

S We made homeless animotos at the end of the year to do with our social studies program. . . . This one kid [was] such a low student . . . . His answer is always, "I don't know." He looked at this picture and it was a picture of a man sitting on a mat and there were all these mats. . . . He looked at this and said this is equity because all the homelessness people can get the same amount of space when they come to the shelter. This is the best he had done all year. It showed a high level of understanding. He just didn't share it traditionally before or wasn't motivated to bother. It was like wow that was really profound because he could explain it to me in a way that fit completely.

L When you were telling me about this child I was thinking wouldn't it have been great to have him share what he learned with someone outside of the classroom in a conversation?

S The problem is that we don't have a good way to share this kind of stuff so like if they had a computer at home, they could email themselves at home and share it at home. But I am pretty sure that would not happen in this school. They could email it home but maybe they'd listen but maybe they wouldn't. (Research Conversation, July 3, 2012)

About halfway through our fourth research conversation on November 26, 2012, I asked Sheila if she felt a tension when I said, "Wouldn't it have been great to have him

(the student Sheila tells me about in our conversation above) share what he learned with someone outside of the classroom in a conversation?" My query led Sheila to tell me how she deals with the frustration of being alongside families who "do not have internet service consistently. Like they have it this month but they don't pay the bill so they don't have it the next month. They change providers because there is a better deal over here and so now it's different" (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012). Instead of relying on the off chance that parents have internet, Sheila initiated sending home a weekly journal that she writes with her students as a way of dealing with this frustration. And although she has to use free time as an incentive to get students to bring their journals signed by their parents, she does feel like she has resolved a situation in a way that models to students that there are many ways to reach one's goals and hopes.

Responding to what makes sense.

As I thought about her comment about modeling that there are many ways to reach one's goals and hopes, I remembered the leadership stories that Sheila shared about being overlooked for positions because she did not, in her opinion, intentionally attend to her end goal which, in turn, reminded me about the surprise I felt when I heard that Sheila was no longer the principal designate. Instead of asking how this decision was made and by whom, I listened as she made sense of how things are different as a result of this decision.

> This year I really made a conscious effort to not be doing so many things outside of the classroom. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

When I asked her, in our third research conversation, what, if anything, she had noticed that was different in her curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), Sheila responded with:

> I think that my focus this year was to focus more on my class and to focus on what I could do . . . Maybe the hope stuff gave me more confidence to close the door on some of that other stuff that goes on because our school is such a busy place. But I did purposely not go to a lot of other professional development or whatever in past years that in past years I would have . . . . I wasn't the principal designate so I wasn't pulled out for a lot of discipline. (Research Conversation, July 3, 2012)

I remembered her response, a few weeks later on August 24, 2012, when we were preparing her room for the students' arrival in the fall. I asked Sheila if she might work with her new administrator on goal setting with the whole staff after she told me that her new administrator mentioned to her that she was thinking of following Sheila's lead to spend more time on goal setting with staff in the new year. She said, "No, I was happy with spending more time with my students last year" (Research Conversation, August 24, 2012). In our fourth research conversation Sheila relayed this new set of developments with:

> I am supposedly the second principal designate. . . . principal designate injured. . . we've got a really good atmosphere . . . . hasn't been too onerous . . . when the principal is away I try to be available . . had a student teacher but she will be gone . . . we will just have to do our best. (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012)

As I embedded this field text into her narrative account, I wondered how Sheila became the principal designate a year after choosing to abandon the role to spend more time with her students. When I asked her to tell me more in our last research conversation on February 6, 2013, Sheila quickly responded that her new principal asked her to be the second designate since Sheila was the principal designate at Grafton previously. Sheila's quick response suggested to me that being the designate did not feel as onerous to her this time around. In other words, there really was no more to say about this topic. It seemed she was in the middle of negotiating her way forward with a new principal who appeared to need her assistance. Sheila offered her assistance because it did not feel as onerous at this time in her life—personally or professionally. It seemed to me that Sheila's stories of being the principal designate demonstrated Sheila both responding responsibly to expectations and attending to possibilities in relationship, which brought me to consider the third and last plotline that surfaced as I worked with Sheila to make sense of her experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay, et al., 2008).

In the methodology chapter, I noted that plotlines are not rigid. Rather, they are fluid and overlap each other. More importantly, plotlines that evolve in any narrative account, depend on who is doing the interpretation and what the interpreter has or is experiencing in relation to his or her ongoing meaning making.

With that in mind, I turn to the third plotline that evolved as I wrote one of the final interim texts of Sheila's narrative account.

Plotline 3: Inspiration comes with intention.

This third plotline evolved as I listened to Sheila tell stories, in our last research conversation on February 6, 2013, about taking a year's leave of absence to travel with her husband. As Sheila storied herself taking the leave, she shared how she was making sense of how she would work with the district's rules regarding leaves of absences. I smiled as I thought back to our conversations of living within the district's expectations in a way that enabled her to continue to nurture her being and becoming so that when she returned she would have the energy she needed to return to the classroom once again.

Returning to my field texts as I found myself coming to the end of Sheila's narrative account, I came across the phrase "inspiration is intention obeyed" (Carr, 1966, p. 32) in my journal on January 29, 2012. I copied the phrase after our conversation about the bits and pieces becoming our life stories the day Sheila signed the consent forms.

As I came to the end of writing Sheila's narrative account, it seemed that Sheila navigated herself forward by staying connected to what inspired her way of being and becoming by setting boundaries and being open to the possibilities alongside the people she was in relationship with. As Sheila and I attended to her experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), I poised myself for possible shifts in her personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

However, after naming what I thought were possible shifts, I wondered later if they were in fact shifts since they felt more like a continuation of her stories to find the happiness in the moment, especially when her hopes and dreams were challenged by the untethered abstract theory and practice funneling down the conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). As I looked back over my field texts after our last research conversation, I noticed Sheila explaining how she shifted her language as a way of making meaningful connections to her personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). As I reflected on what may very well be a reliving of her stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), I noted that it felt more like a building on to rather than a dismantling or shifting away from her personal practical knowledge as expressed in her way of working with hope as a way of being and knowing.

It seemed to me that her intentions to take care of herself remained intact in her refusal to feel guilty for not getting caught up in the impossible expectation of doing and accomplishing more. I saw her imagining and then using journals as a tool to help both her and her students to connect to and remain open to the possibilities instead of feeling

guilty for not constantly striving to do more and being better in less time. I heard Sheila staying awake to how she strove for balance both inside and outside the classroom in a way that met the changing needs of those she interacted with.

In our last research conversation on February 6, 2013, Sheila reflected one last time on her experiences over the last year and a half of working with hope-focused practices. Since I did not have a recorder with me, I wrote the following two word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) as a way of capturing how Sheila made sense of her experiences at the end of our research journey.

Figure 4.1. Word Image 1: Sharing Different Perspectives

> I like to share ideas.
> We never have time in school to talk.
> No one to talk to in school—
> I am the only Grade 6 teacher.
> I love to listen.
> Different perspectives help you realize things you can do.
> It is hard to be by yourself.

Figure 4.2. Word Image 2: New Understandings

> My meaning of hope has changed.
> Never thought about hope in terms of lifestyle.
> Hope message can be a lifestyle.
> Doing things.
> Living it.
> The 7 C's—doing the 7 C's—the caring in communities.
> Action words that make hope achievable. (Research Conversation - February 6, 2013)

Chapter Five: Narrative Account of Carmen

Prologue

Carmen was part of a large professional development district cohort that met with me over a period of three years. Teachers, in Carmen's district, voluntarily participated in the ongoing professional development sessions as lead teachers for their respective schools. The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement[48] funded the professional development sessions for three years as part of the district's health and wellness program. After our first professional development sessions in year one some teachers chose to start with classroom projects and some took on larger school initiatives. There were at any given time 10 to 25 teacher participants in these district-wide sessions over the three years. Some teachers participated for only one year as representatives from their school and others participated for two and a half years. I say two and a half years, because at the end of the second year, the funding for this initiative was reduced across the province, which meant that we were not able to have the third professional development session as we planned in our third year. Carmen joined us for the first professional development session in the second year.

Meeting Carmen

I remember wondering if Carmen might consider becoming a participant in the research after she shared the sculptured hope trees that her students created in our first

[48] The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement was created in 2000 for staff to engage and share the results of research projects across the province.

professional development session on November 9, 2011. In that professional development session Carmen told us that two of her students wrote about the value of paying attention to hope in Brighton's[49] school newsletter after participating in a district-wide retreat with me earlier in the school year. According to Carmen, it was the students' article about the value of paying attention to hope that inspired her, in part, to have all of her students create sculptured "hope trees". Later, Carmen elaborated that she volunteered to be the school representative for a number of other reasons when we talked more about why she chose to become Brighton's representative in our third research conversation on July 25, 2012. First, she felt she had an idea of what was expected of her, given her experiences with hope-focused practices alongside a colleague who participated in the ongoing professional development in her previous school. She said, "I think it was that I knew what it was about already and so I just took it on. . . . It was okay for me because I've had these ideas already." A little later she added more about her experiences with social justice projects at her last school when she said, "[Their] philosophy was "yes" to philanthropy and that related to hope as well so that made it easier for me to pull them together because it is the spiritual aspect of the AISI" (Third Research Conversation, July 25, 2012).

As I pondered Carmen's stories of choosing to participate in the ongoing professional development sessions, I remembered my conversations with her principal

[49] Brighton is a pseudonym.

when I asked for his approval[50] for Carmen to participate in the research study. He assured me that Carmen would be a perfect candidate since she was an exemplary classroom teacher and she did a lot of extra curricular activities for Brighton[51] and the district. However, he also mentioned his concern about her participation in my study. He was concerned that because Carmen was the newest member on his staff, he was uncertain if she would retain her position at Brighton. I assured him that Carmen's participation did not depend on her staying at Brighton, given my interest in making sense of her experiences of working with hope-focused practices in her interactions on and off the school landscape. I anticipated Carmen was familiar with the possibility of having to move schools since she was the last staff person hired at Brighton. I did not tell John[52] I was more concerned about adding more to Carmen's already full plate—especially since she was planning a weekend student retreat. When I shared our concerns with Carmen, she suggested that her principal, John, was most likely also worried about the number of projects she had on her plate four months after joining the staff at Brighton.

Negotiating Our Way Forward as Participants

Not knowing that John may have been struggling with the same concern I had, I invited Carmen to participate after receiving his consent in February of 2012. When I

[50] As part of CAPS I needed my participants' administrators to approve the participation of teachers who expressed interest in participating in my study after receiving Dr. Clandinin's letter of invitation.
[51] Brighton is a pseudonym.
[52] John is a pseudonym.

spoke with Carmen, she chose a day that she had previously set aside to work at Brighton during spring break for our first research conversation. Knowing that she planned to work at Brighton on the day we chose to meet made me feel better about asking her to make time to negotiate our way forward. We met in a coffee shop close to Brighton at 11:00 a.m. so Carmen could also work with her colleague at school as she had originally planned. After we talked about how she preferred to stay in town for spring break and chose instead to go on holidays during the summer and winter break, she shared that she had just booked an international trip for the upcoming summer.

Leading Up to A Narrative Account for Carmen

As we talked our way through the consent form and how we imagined ourselves being alongside each other, I found myself wondering if I was successfully explaining the messy and relational nature of the study compared to Carmen's previous experiences with researchers. As we talked about my visits in her classroom and our subsequent research conversations, I reiterated how this research study might look, feel, and sound different from other research studies. I stressed how we would be making sense each step along the way, beginning with our conversation that morning. I explained this would require our attention in carving out spaces for Carmen to inquire into what I wrote so that she felt her story was being heard, validated, and respected while honouring her busy personal and professional schedule.

As we talked I was also aware that Carmen had a car full of supplies to organize back at school since, as she explained, "I like to get things organized when I have time to do it properly. This way when the students return, things are neat and tidy and in their place" (Research Conversation, March 28, 2012). After she left our hour-long conversation, I sat and wrote my field notes.

Three weeks later (April 19, 2012), I visited her classroom as a participant observer. I arrived at 8:35 a.m. and left with students at 11:30 a.m. The students had the afternoon off, as Carmen prepared herself for her upcoming meetings with her colleagues in the afternoon. Before I left her classroom we set aside two possible dates to meet for our second official research conversation. We set two dates because Carmen did not know how busy she would be, given that she was preparing her first student retreat at the end of the month. The first date was during the lunch hour that immediately followed our second professional development session on April 26, 2012. The second date was the Monday following the student retreat. Once again I found myself worrying about imposing on Carmen's time. When she turned to me at the end of the second professional session and said that she was just too tired to meet, I quickly responded with, "We will meet when it works for you. We do not have to meet on Monday either." Before I had a chance to say more, Carmen said, "No. Monday after school still works for me." With that she quickly left to make her way back to Brighton for the afternoon.

A week and a half later (April 30, 2012), on the Monday we had planned to meet, I realized that we had not confirmed a time other than after school. As I thought back to

the lunch hour, I realized that I neglected to set a time with Carmen because I did not want to make her late, knowing that she was trying to get back to school to have her lunch before returning to the classroom.

After a quick call to her school on that Monday afternoon, I made my way over to Brighton. I was happy that I arrived a little early so that I would be prepared and open to how she was feeling instead of being scattered from driving on the freeway. As I arranged the audio recorder and note pad, I noticed teachers stopping to chat with Carmen on her way over to the table in the staffroom where she suggested we meet. When I asked Carmen if she would be more comfortable having our conversation in her classroom she assured me that we were fine where we were. I began our conversation by suggesting we start with stories of her early life.

After transcribing our research conversation from that Monday afternoon, I wrote the first draft of Carmen's narrative account from my field texts, which later included my field notes from the two professional development sessions on November 9, 2011 and April 26, 2012; my journal entries following our conversation to negotiate her participation in my research study on March 28, 2012; my visit to her classroom on April 19, 2012; and our second research conversation on April 30, 2012.

Early Years

Although Carmen grew up on the south side of a large urban centre in Western Canada, she spent a lot of time at her grandmother's home on the north side of this same

city. As a result she feels at home on both the north and south side of the city. As I began to write her narrative account, I thought back to a moment during a recent visit with my own grandchildren. In this moment, we were sitting on the front porch steps waiting for our dinner to cook. As one grandchild finished writing notes in a theory book that I gave her so that she could play them on the piano when her mother joined us, the other grandchild passed a baby tent caterpillar between his hand and my arm. I felt the corners of my mouth lift ever so slightly as I imagined my grandchildren remembering this moment in the future as a grounding moment, in the same way that it appeared Carmen did as she made sense of her parents' eventual separation when she was in Grade 2. Not long into our conversations and sensemaking Carmen storied herself as someone who chose to be different from her family. As I listened and inquired further into her stories with the commonplaces of narrative inquiry as my guide, other plotlines surfaced. As I reflected on the plotline of choosing to be a little different, the plotline of becoming a little different surfaced alongside the plotline of becoming a teacher. When I visited her classroom as a participant observer I felt the plotline of being a team member resonating backward and forward in the stories that she lived, told, retold and relived as we were making sense of her experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). I began with the first plotline that I noticed as Carmen and I made sense of her early life stories.

Plotlines in Carmen's Narrative Account

Plotline 1: Choosing to be different.

As Carmen reflected on her early family life in two homes on opposite ends of the city and on her parents' separation, she said, "I think growing up I did exactly the opposite of what my family kind of raised me as. Part of it was I wanted to be a little different. There are certain things I did not want to do that my parents were like" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012). As Carmen told how her parents and grandmother became Canadian citizens, I wondered about Carmen's grandmother's hopes for her daughter's family when she encouraged her mother to venture out ahead of Carmen's father. Carmen's mom was encouraged to come to Canada by Carmen's grandmother to run a family store but left that business to start a day home after Carmen's birth. Carmen shared how her mom now makes and sells dried flower arrangements from her home. Carmen's father is a businessman who, in Carmen's words, "Is always in the Chinese community." Carmen's mom, on the other hand, "Does her own thing" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012). Besides spending a lot of time with her maternal grandmother, mother, and younger brother, Carmen spends a lot of time with her mother's family. As a result Carmen is close to her brother and cousins. Carmen explained that she began to see her father more when she was old enough to make her way over to his home.

During our research conversation Carmen storied herself as having a very active social life with her boyfriend of five years. She said:

> I play soccer once a week. I play with a bunch of teachers. We've played together for over two years so that's every Wednesday. I go out and eat a lot. I actually do have quite a social life. We are always invited to something on the weekends. It's rare that we have nothing going on like no birthdays, no weddings. (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

Because Carmen told me very early in our conversation on April 30, 2012 that she strived to be different from her family, I stayed awake to what that looked, sounded, and felt like in her life stories.

Plotline 2: Becoming a little different

Growing up, Carmen and her brother learned to be independent and very close to each other alongside parents who did not talk very much to each other. Carmen stated that she wanted to "be a little different" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012) from her parents, who were, in her words, the exact opposite of each other. She also saw herself as different from her brother and cousins. For example, she was the first one in her mother's family to graduate from university.

As we talked about the tight knit community that surrounded her family, Carmen mentioned her concern about individuals in the district knowing her family stories, given that many individuals from the Chinese community work in the district. Unlike Carmen, I did not feel like I had to separate my personal life stories from my professional stories when I started teaching. I felt I was in charge of how much others knew about me since I

grew up in a community three hours outside the city. Carmen's stories with her own style of being and becoming bolstered my courage as I planned my return to my childhood community where my family stories are well known.

Plotline 3: Becoming a creative and organized teacher alongside.

The plotline of becoming a creative and organized teacher alongside evolved as I listened to Carmen's early life stories in relation to the stories she lived, told and retold about choosing to become a teacher. As I inquired into her stories and my field notes of my experiences of being a participant observer in her classroom I felt, heard and saw the plotline of being a creative and organized teacher weave in, around and through her stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). As a way of making sense of this plotline I started with how her early experiences alongside Mrs. Michaels[53] and her mother informed her being alongside in the classroom. Then I returned to her stories of being a student in Grade 8, since I felt those stories pulling me backward as I watched and listened to her interacting with students who wanted to help her during recess.

Being alongside Mrs. Michaels.

Although Carmen is cautious about which stories she tells and with whom she shares stories, there is one person from Carmen's early life that Carmen continues to maintain contact with as a beginning teacher. This person is Mrs. Michaels. Mrs.

[53] Mrs. Michaels is a pseudonym.

Michaels was Carmen's Grade 1 and 2 teacher. Mrs. Michaels is now an administrator in Carmen's school district, and in Carmen's words, a close friend. Carmen told me about a conversation she had after they became colleagues.

> Mrs. Michaels said: I remember one day you called me and you were just like, "Hello is this Mrs. Michaels? And she said, "Yeah." She said I did this and I kind of remember and I don't. But she said I had called and I just said, "Ohhhhh, I'm just calling because I miss you," and that was it and I said, "All righty then that's all and then that was it. "Good-bye." And still she remembers that. (Second Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

I was curious about the bond that might have been forged at such a critical time in Carmen's life. When we met on July 25, 2012 to read and discuss what I had composed from my initial field texts, Carmen said, "I do not remember other teachers. There was something about her [Mrs. Michaels] that stood out. She just stood out." A little later, Carmen said, "I remember Mrs. Michaels helping another student and myself on a science experiment with mothballs." Hearing this, I pointed out the sentence "a couple of students were trouble shooting with Carmen" from my field notes on my first visit to her classroom on April 19, 2012. Later in this same conversation, Carmen added, "I think it is part of the teacher's role to interact with kids rather than sitting at the computer checking emails" (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012).

Being alongside her mom.

When I asked Carmen why she chose teaching and not occupational therapy, since she storied herself, as a child, imagining being a teacher or occupational therapist, she answered,

> You know as a kid—a girl or boy or whatever, you know you play school at home. I think that is how it stuck. . . . I could not think of myself doing anything else. . . . I think because I am creative in that way. You know even if I wasn't a teacher I would be oh, I could do this with this . . . . I am always thinking of new ideas. . . . It could also be that my mom had a day home. I would help her decorate as well. (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

As Carmen began telling stories about helping her mom decorate their day home, I recollected memories of the many times as a teenager and later as a pre-service teacher I helped my mom decorate her room on Sunday afternoons. Thinking back to how I always had student work displayed as a result of those long Sunday afternoon experiences, I located my field notes from my first visit to Carmen's classroom. Shortly after walking into her classroom on April 19, 2012, I wrote, "I am struck by the organization of the room. The room is bright and very neat and tidy." A little later in my field notes I jotted down, "I will open the class library when everything is labeled," which was a comment Carmen made to a student who started to walk into the library centre to find a book to read (Field Notes, April 19, 2012). During my second visit to her classroom as a participant observer, I wrote: on the back door the brightly coloured word

'creativity' is written sideways. Alongside that there was a poster with the title A Good Teammate is . . ." (Field Note, June 19, 2012).

Thinking back to our research conversation on April 30, 2012, I remembered Carmen saying, "That is where the creativity comes out. You have students in class who are creative and they try to reach that level. It gives them the motivation as well as maybe a little pressure because they want to make things look good. I am always talking about making things look presentable and attractive" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012) when I told her that I saw her challenging her students to always do their best when I visited her classroom on April 19, 2012. Carmen's response on April 30, 2012 about what I observed during my visit to her classroom prompted me to say, "You are much more organized than I am. However, I am curious about one more thing and that is your love of art" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012). Thinking back to that conversation, I remember not being surprised to hear her say, "Art gets the creative side out" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012), given our conversations about the artwork on her bulletin boards during recess on April 19, 2012. However, I was intrigued by her comment,

> I always try to connect art with other subjects. It's like we did the paintings of the clouds on the canvas. Connect that with your science and weather. You connect as much as you can and the kids will remember it more. The kids know their clouds only because they loved painting them. (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

As we talked about the stories of her school experiences that possibly contributed to her desire and love of being creative in thinking about how to make learning fun, engaging and challenging for students, I thought about her attention to detail and order in the classroom. As I tried to make sense of what I experienced as a very brightly organized learning environment with student work on the walls and where every student put their materials "in their homes," I remembered Carmen's comments from our second research conversation about creating spaces for her students to be engaged in their learning.

> I have to have student work up. I am just very organized. I am very particular about things and I think the kids are more engaged when you make learning fun, whether it is having colourful stuff in your room or making them do all these projects and not just paper and pencil activities. (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

I remembered thinking back to Carmen's excitement about organizing her classroom over spring break during our first research conversation on March 28, 2012 as I wrote in my field note Carmen's comment about having to wait to use the library centre on my visit to her classroom on April 19, 2012. Later, in our second research conversation, Carmen said, "Every sheet has a home," when I told her that I heard myself saying, "Now, I want to see you put this sheet in your duo tang," to students I was working alongside after my first visit to her classroom (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012).

When we talked more about the connection I made to everything having a home and her need for organization in our third research conversation on July 25, 2012, Carmen agreed that she definitely learned to be organized from her mom. However, the statement "everything has a home" was something that Carmen came up with herself. As I pondered her insistence that she came up with the statement on her own I remembered our conversations about her mom creating a space for each child to display their artwork on the bulletin board in her kitchen. I wondered how Carmen made sense of the other children sharing a space on the bulletin board in her kitchen in her mom's home and their returning to their homes each evening alongside how she navigated between her grandmother's and mom's home.

During my visit on April 19, 2012, Carmen presented the tubs of neatly organized materials for the students and then asked students to organize the materials so they were ready to begin immediately after recess. Later, I saw how her expectations for being organized prepared students for the rigor of participating in the group book club conversations. I saw this when the students arrived in the discussion group. One student was named the group leader and as such was in charge of directing the group discussion and questions. I could sense by the alertness of the other students that they were ready for the group leader's wonders. When I shared this with Carmen she explained that she tells students they always need to be prepared so that "they are not letting the team down" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012).

Being alongside Grade 8 teachers.

Carmen mentioned her experiences in Grade 8 as also influencing her decision to become a teacher. Carmen shared how she was both part of a peer leadership group and played sports in junior high. When she relayed that her junior high teachers asked her to write students' names on the year-end certificates, I remembered two students coming to Carmen at the recess break, again on April 19, 2012, asking if there was something that they could do to help. Carmen said, "No not today," and then after a few seconds she added, "Wait there is some cutting out you can do." When I asked Carmen if students help her at recess regularly she responded with:

> My whole class loves to help. . . In a way they are proud of themselves but at the same time it gives them that ownership. . . It teaches them responsibility. It teaches them about being helpful. . . . I can see some of them saying that they want to be a teacher when they grow up too because they get to help. . . . [Some] kids are not going to remember electricity and how to make a series or parallel circuit. They are going to remember a time when you let them do something. (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012)

Hearing her reflect back on her experiences alongside Mrs. Michaels and of helping teachers as a student in Grade 8, I recalled her principal telling me about Carmen's drive to create extracurricular opportunities for students both at Brighton and in the district. As I reflected on these stories of Carmen in relation to Mrs. Michaels and her Grade 8 teachers and how Carmen recollected how these experiences shaped her life, I

made note of what felt like a connecting thread in Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

It appeared that Carmen learned to challenge her students to be the best they can from her experiences with teachers and family members like her mother, Mrs. Michaels, and her Grade 8 teachers who created spaces for her to contribute her knowledge and skills as a creative and organized team player and learner alongside. Since there were many references to being a team player in my field texts, I turn to that plotline next.

Plotline 4: Being and becoming a team member.

Upon entering Carmen's classroom, as a participant observer for the first time on April 19, 2012, I noticed that the desks were arranged in groups. When it was time for science, new set of groups formed quickly. Carmen began by telling the students that they had to determine how to best work together. She ended her demonstration of the steps for the group activity by saying, "You are going to make something more challenging than mine" to the students. During the visit, I noticed the students putting away their books and washing their desks in preparation for home time. I heard Carmen say, "There is something under your desk. Come on, you are part of a team" (Field Note, April 19, 2012). At the end of my visit, I noticed the "Team Lee"[54] poster on her door. Seeing that Carmen was still talking to a couple of students, I made a mental note to ask

[54] Lee is the pseudonym we settled on for Carmen's last name.

her about Team Lee stories in our research conversation. When I asked her on April 30, 2012 about the poster she said:

> It is all about team work. . . I work on teamwork and I talk about the importance of teamwork on day one. Not because we are a race team. That was our theme at the beginning of the year. If we are walking down the hallway at the beginning I try to get them in single file. . . . You are walking too fast or you are not conscious of your group. So it is teamwork. Do not leave your team behind—you have to wait. (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

As I listened to Carmen, I thought back to how the book club unfolded when she said, "You need to challenge each other so you go deeper into the text. That is part of being in a book club" (Field Notes, April 19, 2012). When I told her that I noticed students going to each other instead of going to her for help when she was busy with the book club group, she responded with, "It is not just about how each person does independently. It is how you are responding to and challenging each other" (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012).

Attending to Frameworks for Future Learning[55]

As a way of analyzing and interpreting Carmen's experiences with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in relation to social justice projects in a faith-based district,

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[55] I borrowed this phrase from Bateson (1994) who helped me to realize that often times we need to look through and with our peripheral vision as a way of altering the meaning of the foreground to help us make sense of what we cannot see or understand since as Bateson suggests our "experience is structured in advance by stereotypes and idealizations, blurred by caricatures and diagrams" (p. 5).

I decided to attend more closely to moments where I noticed tensions in Carmen's plotlines.

To do this, I imagined working with phrases from Carmen's stories in the way I worked with Carlyle collage-making in the pilot study. I imagined pulling out phrases where I felt she might be experiencing bumping up moments or tensions in the stories she lived, told and retold. To do this, I cut out and arranged groups of words that represented bumping up moments on a page like I did with the sponged pieces of paper when I created Carlyle images in the pilot study. After arranging the phrases or word images[56] (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) on a page I returned to my field texts, using the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), to help me understand and or inquire more deeply into the tension I felt. By this I mean I attended to the past, present and future stories that Carmen lived, told, retold and relived in relation to the word images. I attended to her personal hopes, dreams, fears and aesthetic reactions and the social exigencies that may or may not have contributed to the tension I felt in her plotlines of choosing to become different, becoming a teacher and being a team member. I also wondered about how the different places Carmen lived and imagined living influenced the bumping up moments that I felt. As I reflected on the bumping up moments in relation to the commonplaces of narrative inquiry I wrote around, through and within the word images on each page.

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[56] As I explained in chapter three, I pulled out actual phrases that resembled Clandinin's (1986) notion of images that lived within and contributed to Carmen's life stories. Huber and Clandinin (2005) named these phrases fragments of stories or word images.

Making Sense of the Four Plotlines With Carmen

I started with three word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) from my field notes on April 19, 2012 and our research conversation on July 25, 2012. The last word image came from our conversation on August 28, 2012 when I visited her classroom to see how she had "changed it up" (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012) for her Grade 6 students.

Figure 5.1. Word Image 1: Comparing experiences

> Thing with Brighton students and their families
> Compared to the other two schools taught at —
> A lot of student driven projects
> Not me saying, "What do you think we should do?
> Let's talk about the current events."
>
> It is in Brighton's culture to always give.
> Also think financially families can give.
> I think that it's already in the children.
> (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012)

I thought back to our conversation during the second professional development session about doing things with as opposed to doing things for someone. I wanted to interject at this time to ask if Carmen remembered our conversation toward the end of our morning together. (Comment While Transcribing, August 8, 2012)

Figure 5.2. Word Image 2: Supporting the team

> Supported each other as a team
> (Field Note, April 19, 2012)

Figure 5.3. Word Image 3: Waiting for administration to decide

> Waiting to hear from administration.[57]
> (Field Note, August 28, 2012)

After physically cutting the word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) out, I arranged them around the outer edges of an 11 x 18 inch sheet of paper. I placed the first word image in the right hand corner and the second, third, and fourth word images, one at a time, underneath. Then I started at the bottom of the left hand side of the page and placed the images one on top of each other until the last word image was sitting at the top of the left hand side. I purposefully left the sheet with the images on my desk so that every time I walked by or sat down at my desk, I pondered how each word image and the whole set of word images connected to and/or did not connect to the stories Carmen lived, told, retold and relived in my field texts. I pulled out other word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) from my field texts to help me stay awake to what I noticed in my peripheral vision (Bateson, 1994) as a way of making sense of the bumping up moments. Placing the other word images alongside the bumping up moments sometimes provided me with a sense of the word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) evolved for Carmen both personally and socially over time in different places. However, so as not to make assumptions from what I noticed I maintained an inquiry stance or wide-awake stance,

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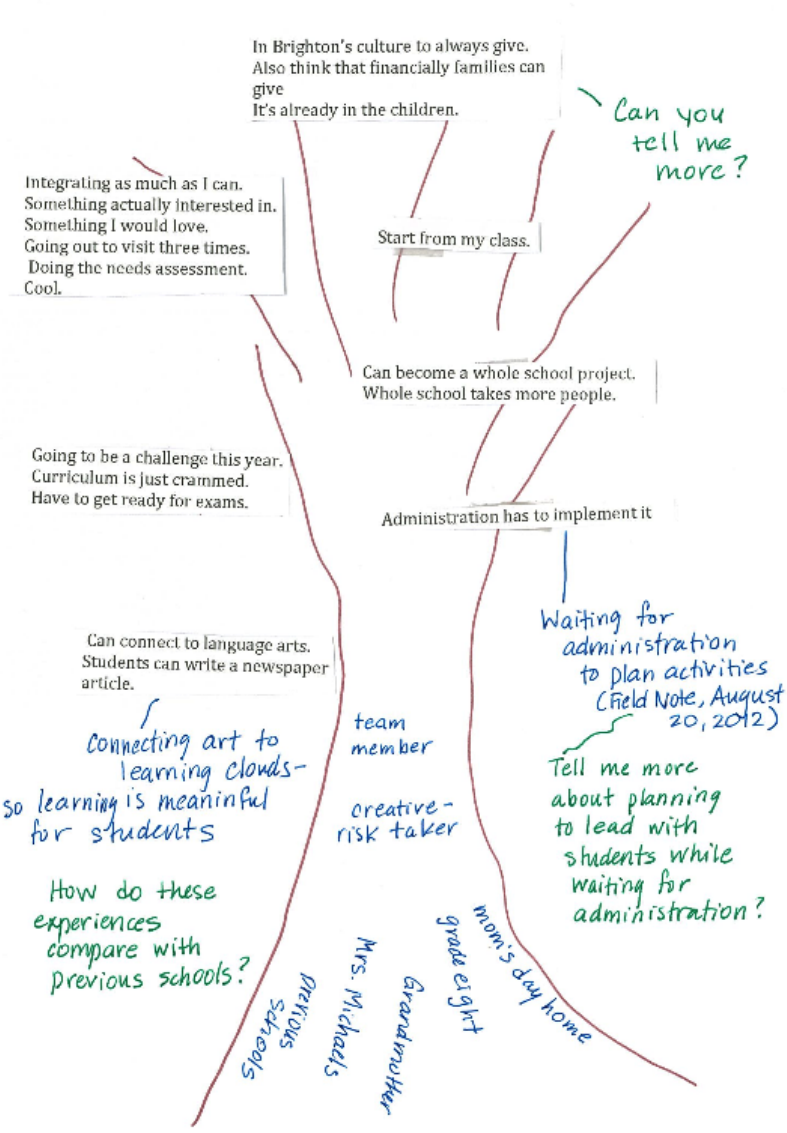
[57] Carmen told me that the staff chose respect as Brighton's school-wide theme for the upcoming year. I was delighted to see the word respect written on the bulletin board because it is a word that is often mentioned when discussing what hope sounds, feels and looks like. When I suggested that she might weave hope into conversations with students, Carmen told me that she did not know what her administration team has in mind for the word respect. I remembered seeing the following creed on her wall during my second visit as a participant observer in her classroom on June 19, 2012. The creed read: We will be respectful (Field Note, August 20, 2012).

which prompted new wonders. I wrote my new wonders in green. As I attended to these new wonders I found myself tracing the outline of a tree to hold the images into a coherent whole to represent Carmen's life stories in that moment. As I did this I added words in the roots and trunk that came to me in the same way that I ask workshop participants to do when they create hope trees for themselves.

Figure 5.4. Word Image 4: Growing hope and attending to challenges



With the tree in hand, I arrived at Brighton an hour before school started on Monday, December 10, 2012 to continue to make sense with of her experiences. Carmen and I sat down away from teachers coming and going as they prepared for the week before the Christmas break. I shared why and how I created the tree. I explained how I found and arranged the word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) around the tree, starting from the top right hand corner in a circular motion around to the top left hand corner. Our conversation proceeded from there.

Me I said your students were perfect candidates for community service-learning projects. Something I said in the very first conversation we had. Do you have similar stories from other schools?

Carmen Those probably are the other two schools I worked at. . . . There's a lot the district does already.

Me Can you remember what you might have been thinking because you talked about the students here doing a lot of projects. There was a little boy who wanted to do a project.

Carmen I wonder if I meant that in the way that the schools in need—or am I talking about schools that I went to?

Me I started to write and make a lot of assumptions. I wondered how Brighton is different from the other two schools where you taught?

Carmen Okay now this makes sense. At St. Agnes and St. Gertrude[58], it [social justice project] was chosen by the teachers and then you would get student buy in. Whereas here at Brighton we have a lot of students who will write a proposal, give it to John [the principal], and John sits with them sometimes.

Me Okay so here it is more individual students coming up with a project?

Carmen Yes, we just finished with one of our boy's grandma's Christmas dinner for the less fortunate at her church. We did it last year. I had the same boy in my class. So this year we just did it again. . . . Right now we are trying to limit it because it has to be meaningful . . . . previous where it happens but they [students] forget about it 2 weeks down the road . . . it was not meaningful. (Research Conversation, December 10, 2012)

Carmen went on to tell me how her students decided, as a group, that they would embark on a community service project instead of having a Christmas party after they conducted research as part of their hope needs assessment. However, not long into her

[58] Pseudonyms

telling I heard disappointment in her voice when she told me that she had to tell her students they would not be participating in a service-learning project after all. Later, as she talked about feeling responsible for her students' success on the upcoming provincial achievement tests, even though everyone talked about learning being shared across the grades, my hands instinctively shielded my heart as I blurted out, "Oh, I just feel right here for you." I remembered previous conversations with Grade 8 students who introduced the idea of "hope suckers" in my work at the Hope Foundation. Those Grade 8 students told me that "hope shields" protect our hearts from hope suckers. I wondered how Carmen would story herself using a hope shield as she navigated her way forward with her students, given they could not proceed as the school leaders with the service-learning project they planned.

I wrote the following phrases in my field notes on that Monday morning:

Competition less in moderate income—parents

new teacher on the block

pressure

business vs family atmosphere

stress of being a new teacher.

(Field Note - December 10, 2012)

Although I worried how Carmen was experiencing not being able to carry through what she storied as "something that she would like to do" in our July 25, 2012 research conversation alongside her comments on December 10, 2012 when she said, "Maybe it

will happen in the new year," I reminded myself that she storied herself as choosing to be different. Doing this helped me to imagine how she might choose to continue storying herself as being different when she returned in January. As I transcribed our research conversation I wrote journal entries like the ones that follow.

> I did not expect Carmen to tell stories of pushing forward with encouraging service-learning. I still wonder how Carmen could live with waiting for the administrative team on the one hand and working with the hope-focused practices on the other . . . . Risk taker—yes—doing things differently. I worry about Carmen putting herself 'at risk' as a teacher beginning who wants to make meaningful connections for her students but who cannot, at the same time, take too many risks. She says, "Maybe we can try again after Christmas." I am acutely aware that she has to contain her class projects within the district and school projects. (Journal Entry, December 31, 2012)

On March 12, 2013, I wrote: Carmen sits on the edges of my mind these days . . . I wonder how her district is making sense of the loss of the AISI[59] grant money.

As I wrote in and around the word images where I felt bumping up moments in Carmen's living, telling, retelling and reliving from my transcription of our conversation on December 10, 2012, I burrowed deep inside my field texts to make sense of how our research conversations unfolded alongside Carmen's and my stories of understanding her

[59] In March 2013, the Alberta Provincial Government announced they would no longer fund AISI projects across Alberta due to budget restraints. Since AISI enabled teachers in Carmen's school district to participate in professional development sessions, I wondered how Carmen and her colleagues would continue to have conversations about different ways of living out the mind, body, spirit connection without the AISI funding.

experiences of working with the hope-focused practices in her curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). I engaged the narrative inquiry commonplace of temporality to make sense of what transpired in Carmen's past alongside what transpired in our interactions as we each imagined her living future stories of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

I contacted Carmen to arrange a time for us to meet four months later. Knowing that Carmen was in the middle of planning another student retreat, I suggested we meet over spring break. We met on Monday, March 25, 2013 during spring break, at a coffee shop close to her home. The words I wrote in my field notes a day after our research conversation were very different from the words I wrote after our last research conversation on December 10, 2012 as this next entry demonstrates.

> Carmen seemed lighter—more bubbly—like she shed a huge weight off her shoulders. When I mentioned this to her she acknowledged that things were going better. Yet I could not shake what felt like such a big change in her demeanor from our last research conversation. She was, on December 10, 2012, as my field texts and word images demonstrated, worried, concerned, and bothered by the fact that her students were excited about being involved in choosing their service-learning project by doing a hope needs assessment . . . I cannot get over how she appears to have aligned herself with the school and district stories. (Field Note, March 26, 2013)

I wondered how I would make sense of the huge shift I felt in her stories between our conversation when she and her students "ran into barriers [as the] newbie in Grade 6 where there is pressure on the teacher . . . [alongside] the chaotic, competitive feeling from parents [who ask] why did so and so's class do this and not you?" (Research Conversation, December 10, 2012). I wondered also about the "lighter more bubbly Carmen" (Field Note, March 26, 2013) I met on March 25, 2013. Finally I wondered what Carmen was saying and not saying when she said, "The students were disappointed but you know . . . . we discussed the reasons why and the kids understood . . . I am not stressed by the provincial achievement tests. . . . sharing brought us closer together. . . I feel a bit more comfortable."

I used a blue pen to mark entries from my field texts where I felt bumping up moments in her plotlines. I used a green pen to delineate wonders and/or aha moments that surfaced as I worked back and forth between each word image that I pulled forward from the field texts—all the while attending to the commonplaces of sociality, temporality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Then I searched out the 11 x 18 inch paper source that I used to create Carlyle collages 2 years ago. I folded a sheet in half and glued the first word image from our December 10, 2012 conversation onto it. Glancing over at the first word image from our March 25, 2013 conversation I noticed that the second word image from our December 10, 2012 research conversation went in between the two word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005). I attached the first two word images onto the 11 x 18 inch sheet with a

paper clip and then did the same with the first word image from March 25, 2013 onto what would be the next page of my dissertation. I wrote the narrative commonplaces; temporality, sociality, and place evenly spaced out on the fourth page blank page with the four directions backward, forward, inward, outward at the bottom of the page.

Looking across the word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005), I imagined myself working with the commonplaces of sociality, temporality, and different situations in different places to help me attend to possible threads weaving across and through the pages. At that moment I also realized I did not need to include the fourth page since I only needed it to inspire my way forward at a time when I did not know how to proceed with making sense of the word images on the first three pages. However, I knew that I needed to use the physicality of three pages sitting alongside each other to help me unpack the word images using the commonplaces and four directions to interpret Carmen's ongoing experiences of working with the hope-focused practices in her curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). The following three pages demonstrate how I wrote in, around, and through the word images, my field texts, and the narrative inquiry commonplaces in my co-composing with Carmen up until that moment.

Figure 5.5. Word Image 5: Trying with Grade 6's

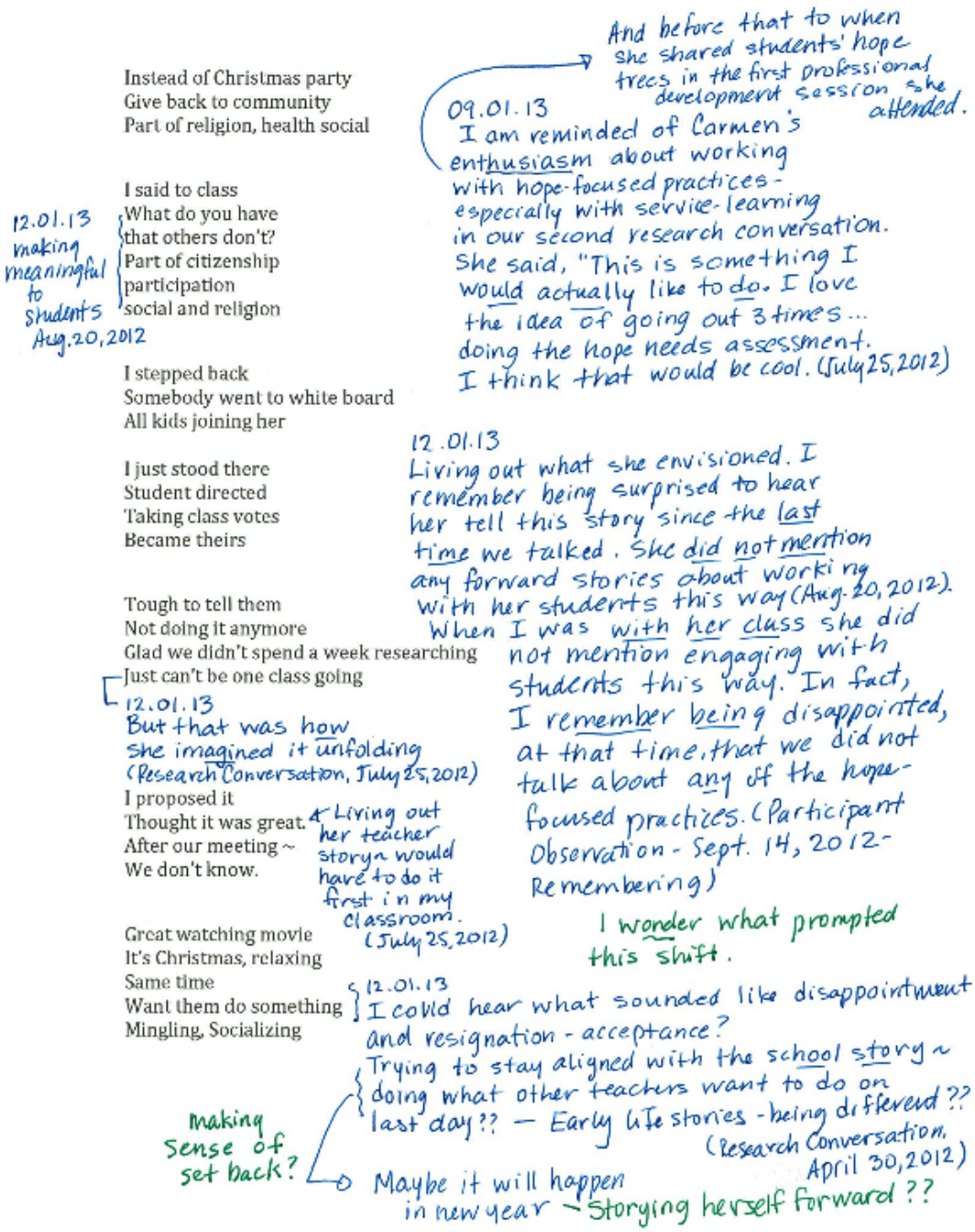


Figure 5.6. Word Image 6: Deciding on social justice projects

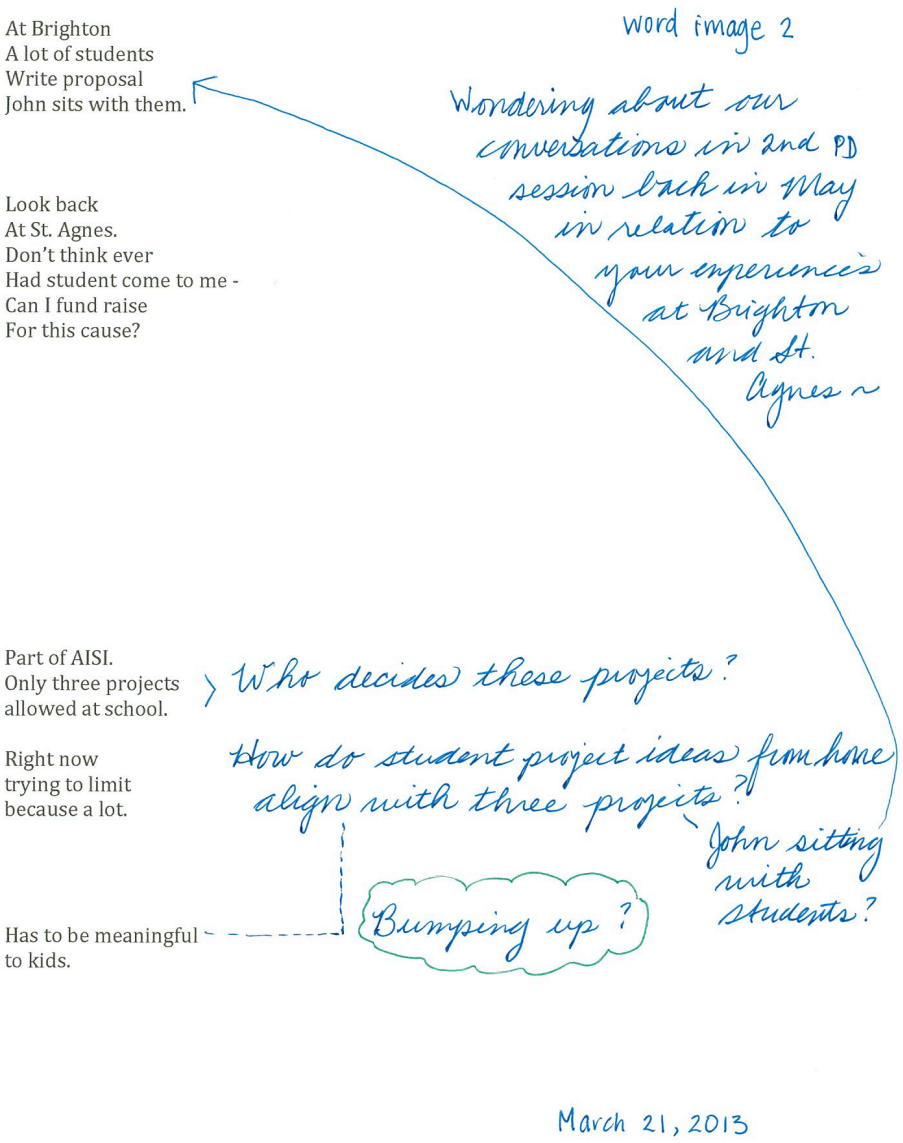
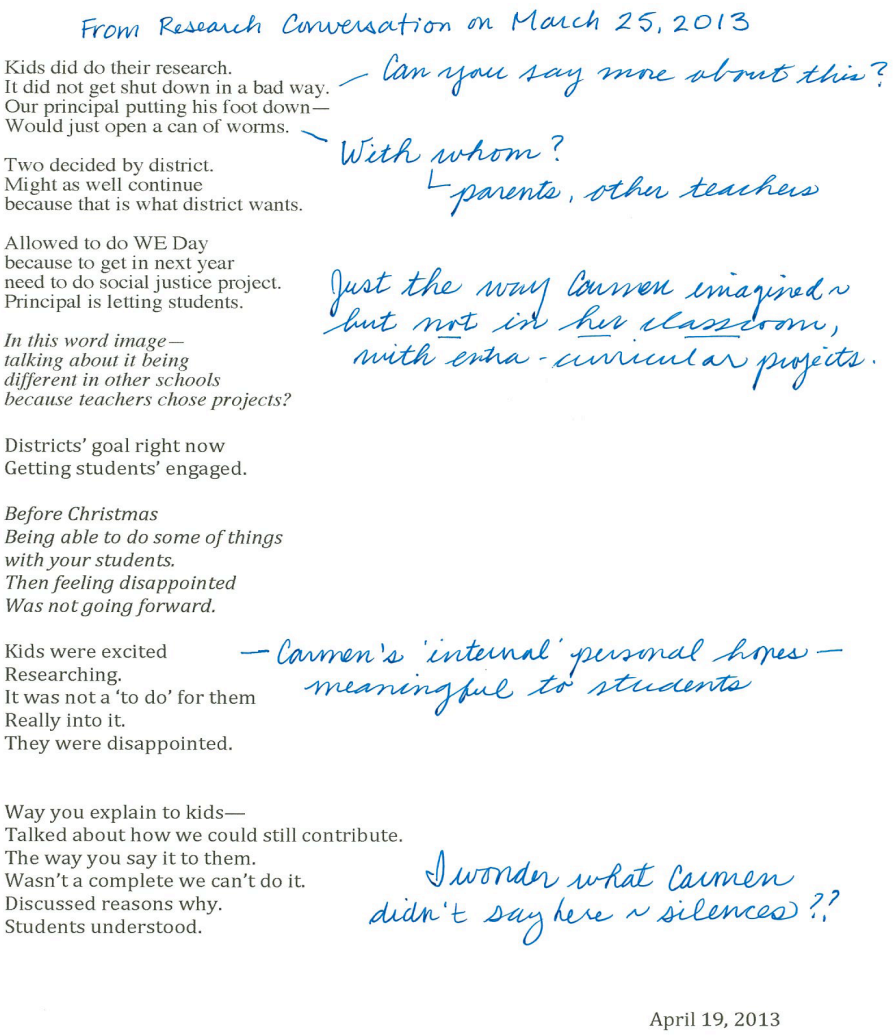


Figure 5.7. Word Image 7: All is well after all?



Unfortunately, my plan to begin interpreting did not unfold as I imagined it would. Although I hoped the structure of the three commonplaces and four directions would provide me with what I needed to interpret the three word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005), I found myself writing around in circles instead of in, through, and around the images as I hoped. I made a space for the three pages to sit on my desk so that I could add ideas whenever they came to me while I prepared for an upcoming conference. However, it was not until I wrote the following journal entry a few weeks later in the hotel lobby at the 2013 AERA conference that I felt and heard what I needed to begin unpacking the word images and the writing that I did around the word images.

> Walked up and down the hills of San Francisco after breakfast today. As I walked I thought back to the trip I took in 2002 at this same time of year to Vancouver. It was on my trip to Vancouver that I took photographs to help me make sense of my experiences of hope and hopelessness as an educator for my master's thesis. As I thought back to the walks in Vancouver with my camera in hand, I stopped a block away from my hotel in San Francisco without thinking, to admire a set of doors on an immense brick building. The moment I pulled out my camera I thought back to an idea that came to me on the flight over to San Francisco. The idea came to me as I tried to imagine myself unpacking the two sets of word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) and the writing I did in and around them over the last 4 months in-between writing a paper for the conference. After taking a series of photographs of the door and the ivy covered brick walls, a small plaque

> with the phrase 'Weaving Come Spiders No More' with an image of an owl in the centre caught my attention. Putting my camera back in my bag I returned to my writing table in my hotel room with an added skip in my step. (Journal Entry, April 30, 2013)

Back in my hotel room I used the photographs to assist me in the unpacking the first series of word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005). The first two word images surfaced from our December 2012 research conversation and the third one in the series from our conversation on March 25, 2013. I imagined the ivy on the brick walls representing district and school priorities competing with Carmen's personal hopes and dreams of working alongside her students to create a social justice project in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). Like the plaque on the wall that suggested spiders were not welcome to spin their webs, I wondered if there are spaces both in the district and in her school for Carmen to spin a web that was *a little different*. As I looked back to our July 25, 2012 research conversation when Carmen imagined herself working with her students as they coordinated a hope-focused project for the whole school, I remembered that she storied herself doing this with her students as a risk taker who was not afraid to be a little different.

Sliding back even further I remember the bulletin board that I saw in the hallway at Brighton on my second visit to her classroom on June 15, 2012. The bulletin board was filled with a field of flowers. Each of the flowers had a staff name and two words that described each staff member. Carmen's flower had "creative" and "risk taker"

written on it. In our research conversation on July 25, 2012, I asked her about the sunflowers. Carmen said, "We had to put down what our gifts and talents were. When I think of risk taker I think of constantly thinking of ideas. I think as a teacher you have to try a lot of new ideas. Learning new strategies, that is risk taking" (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012). As I thought about these stories, I wondered what Carmen learned about being a creative risk taker in relation to her experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

As I continued to attend to the images, I also thought about how Carmen made sense of having to negotiate with other stakeholders like parents and other teachers, on and off the school landscape in relation to her early life stories of choosing to be a little different. Returning to my field texts, I found two other word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) that I originally set aside as the tree outline took shape (Word Image 4) in the fall of 2012 as I worked with the word images from our research conversation on July 25, 2012.

Figure 5.8. Word Image 8: Living with stakeholders' expectations

Parent writing a letter saying, "Could you support this?
My child thought it would be a great idea."
I said, "Sure."
It was not me saying, "What do you think we should do?
Let's talk about current events."

Figure 5.9. Word Image 9: Making sense of stakeholders' expectations

Came up last year.
Rather than having so many projects
Brighton is filled.

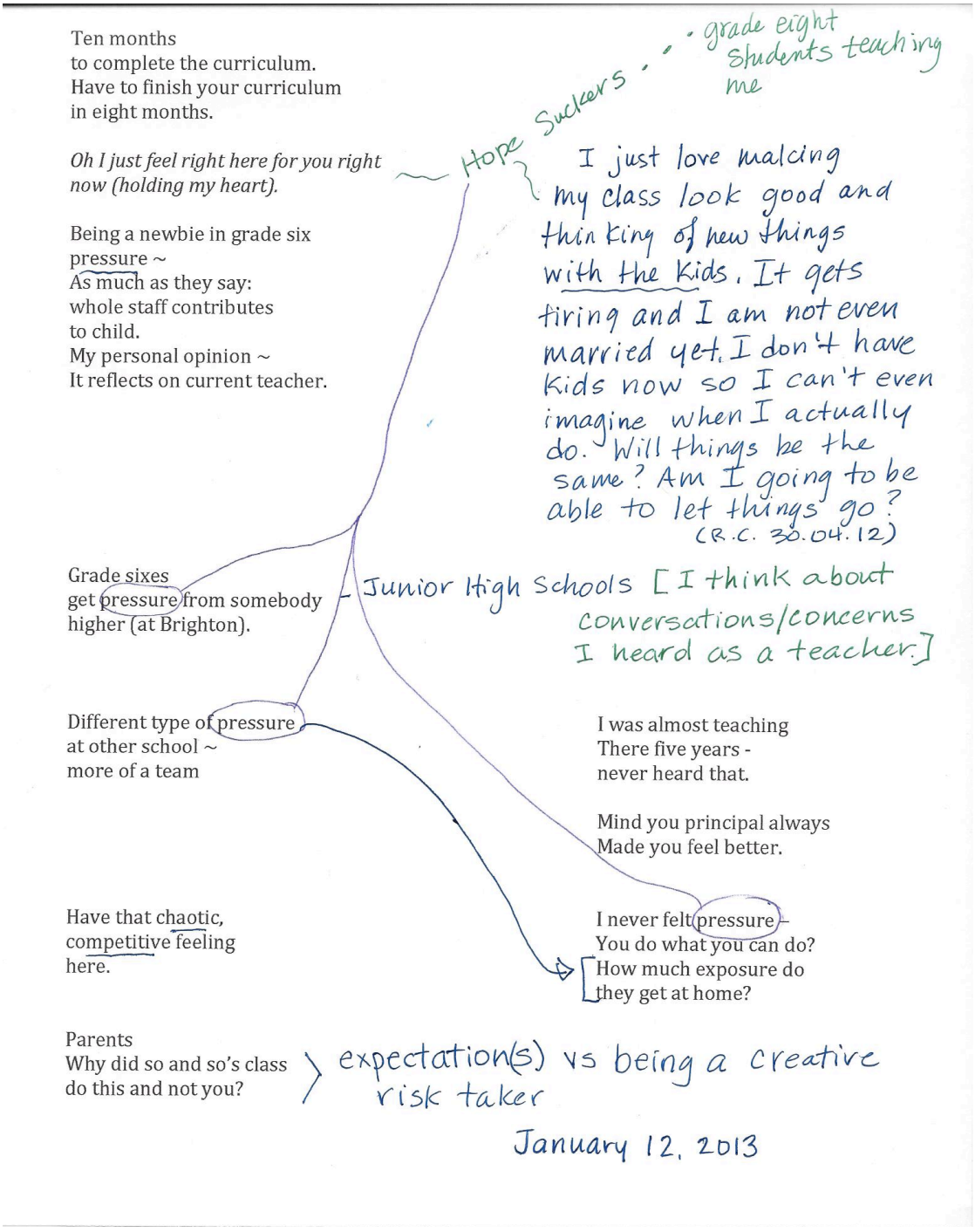
It gets too much.
Talked as a staff
Reach out with one project?
Then each homeroom
takes a turn—
whether a Seniors' Home
or whatever. (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012)

As I examined these word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) with the narrative inquiry commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), I looked for the moments where I felt Carmen's stories bumping up against each other as a way of understanding her experiences of working with the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope. In word image 8 Carmen relayed how she incorporated projects coming in to Brighton from families in the community. In the second image Carmen imagined herself working with her colleagues to manage the deluge of projects that filter onto the school landscape. I felt a second bumping up in her stories between these two word images when she said, "What do you think we should do? Let's talk about current events," as she imagined a different way of choosing social justice projects with her students in relation to their academic learning in Word Image 8. I also heard her imagining a different way of being with social justice projects at Brighton, alongside her colleagues, when she said, "Talked as a staff. Reach out with one project?" As she imagined a different way of working both in her classroom and with her colleagues as they made sense of the deluge of social justice projects coming in to Brighton, from parents, I thought also about Carmen saying, "Brighton gets too much" (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012).

On December 10, 2012 when I asked about her experiences in other schools compared to Brighton in relation to this comment Carmen shared that in her experience (as a student and beginning teacher), teachers in other schools decided social justice projects without the students' input. She did not recall doing research and/or seeing students in her last two schools researching in the way her current students were excited about. Although Carmen said she was inspired by how students at her previous school embraced the lead teacher's idea for a hope-focused social justice project, I remembered hearing Carmen say, during my first visit to her classroom on April 19, 2012 that she "likes to give students choices so they learn to set their own priorities" (Field Notes, April 19, 2012). As I thought about how, in her words, the hope-focused needs assessment research "did not get shut down in a bad way" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013), I wondered how she continued to make sense of what transpired after she proposed to the administration and other Grade 6 teachers that her students hoped to spend time with a community group of their choosing instead of having a Christmas party—especially in relation to how she explained to her students that they could still contribute—just not in the way they, or she, imagined. Most of all, I wondered how her way of being with social justice projects that are chosen by parents, the district, and administration team will sustain Carmen's story of herself as a risk taker, always thinking of ideas, and of choosing to be a little different?

After working with the first nine word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005), I turned my attention to this next group of word images from our research conversation on December 10, 2012.

Figure 5.10. Word Image 10: Coping with hope suckers



As I reflected on the word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) I created from our conversation on December 10, 2012 alongside the multitude of references to teamwork in my field texts over the last year and a half, and then on our research conversation on March 25, 2013, I wrote stories of coping - completing curriculum - chaotic, competitive environment across the top of page of the word images. Then I traveled back into our most recent conversation in search of word images that would help me understand how Carmen was making sense of coping with having to complete the curriculum in a chaotic, competitive environment.

Figure 5.11. Word Image 11: Teaching style changed

I heard a lot
In Grade 5
Trying to get through curriculum
Newbie in Grade 6 feel
Expectations coming down on you/
Making meaningful for students.

Have to remind myself
Kids are ones writing tests.
Want to do well
Have to study.
Gave my full effort.

Help of grade partners
Teaching style changed.
If back in Grade 5
be fine.
Not stressed about provincial
achievement tests.

You seem different ~
Lighter
More relaxed.

Returning students
Grade 6 team got to know me.
All over achievers—
Where competitiveness comes out.
Don't want to reinvent the wheel.
Giving back and forth.

Sharing brought us closer together.
Being one of the newer teachers
Doing different things.
It is a good group
I feel a bit more comfortable.

Year before had an hour
Teaching health and wellness
So never got my time.

Gift of time—
Next year for health and wellness
(Research Conversation - March 25, 2013)

As I began pulling word images (Huber & Clandinin, 2005) from our conversation on March 25, 2013, I journeyed backward to earlier field texts as a way of making sense of this lighter tone that Carmen explained, in part, as a change in her teaching style. As I did this, I reflected on how she storied her teaching style changing alongside her stories about her Grade 6 teaching partners contributing to her realization that her students were responsible for how they did on the provincial achievement tests—since she did her part. I thought back to my first visit as a participant observer in her

classroom on April 19, 2012 and her comments in our research conversation on April 30, 2012.

On April 30, 2012, Carmen said, "Students need to know there is such a thing as grades. . . . and if you get an insufficient, it is an insufficient because something went wrong on your end . . . What do you need to do to improve?" In our conversation I reminded her that during my visit to her classroom on April 19, 2012, I heard her tell students that if they were spending too much time on a question that something was wrong.

Remembering these conversations and my first visit, I turned my attention back to her comment about not being stressed about the provincial achievement tests (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). Given the number of times she mentioned not having enough time to cover the curriculum in Grade 5 and being responsible for how well the students did as the Grade 6 teacher in our conversation on and before December 10, 2012, I noted what felt like a possible shift in Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as I listened to her story. What felt like a new and budding relationship with her Grade 6 colleagues, participating in the give and take, back and forth as a team member, I thought back to the fear I heard in Carmen's stories in our first research conversation about having to keep up with the demands in the classroom. Reflecting on these earlier stories, I heard how Carmen currently appreciated being on a team of overachievers like herself who share the load of generating ideas. However, I wondered if it was more than the sharing of ideas that contributed to Carmen's lighter and more

relaxed sense of sharing the responsibility for the Provincial Achievement Tests. As Carmen said, it was the other teachers that helped her to understand that she is not solely responsible for the students doing well at the end of the year. However, I also wondered how Carmen will be able to, as a risk taker with many ideas, sustain her stories to live by, given our conversation on April 30, 2012 when she said: Do not leave your team behind. You have to wait." I wonder about this as I think back to hearing Carmen say, "It wasn't a complete cannot do it" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). I wondered if in her saying, "Perhaps not yet,"[60] she was storying herself forward in a way that allowed her to stay focused on her hopes and dreams.

As I listened to Carmen tell of changing her teaching style as a result of being on a team that helped her reaffirm that it is up to her students to do their part on the provincial achievement tests, I remembered the conversations we had about the 'pressure' of being a 'newbie' and being responsible for the students doing well (Research Conversation, December 10, 2012).

However, my wonders about this possible shift pulled me back to Carmen's response in our first research conversation when I asked her about choosing to become a teacher. Our conversation, which follows, brought about new wonders as I thought about how she feels like she belongs on the Grade 6 teaching team.

C I do not know if I could do teaching for years . . . It is exhausting . . . I could see myself doing another position in education but not a teaching position.

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[60] As we put forth in the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource, the language of yet and not yet is hopeful language that helps us to stay focused on our hopes and dreams (LeMay, et al., 2008).

L You said you taught five years —

C Five and I keep telling people that I am going to teach another five and then I am done. Because it is exhausting . . . People say you do not have to do half the things you do . . . but that is not me. . . . I think students are more engaged when you make learning fun whether that is having colourful stuff in your room or making them do all these projects and not just paper and pencil. (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

A little later in this same research conversation, I said, "So five more years?" Carmen responded with, "Things may change but I am the type that needs something different . . . in the education field." (Research Conversation, April 30, 2012)

Looking back at this conversation in relation to what transpired in our interactions since April 30, 2012, I wondered if her new relationship with her Grade 6 colleagues will sustain Carmen's need for "something different."

Responsibility Deepens as Understanding of Curriculum Making Widens[61]

Since my research puzzle focused on Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices in her curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), I created spaces in our research conversations and professional development sessions for Carmen to tell and retell stories of her experiences of working with hope as a way of being and

[61] Here I borrowed Huber's (2008) heading to describe what I learned about Carmen's experiences of making sense of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) toward the end of co-composing her narrative account with her.

knowing. I also paid close attention to what I noticed during my visits to her classroom as a participant observer. In our first professional development session, Carmen shared sculptured hope trees that her students created after two of her students returned from a 'hope mask making session' with me at a district-wide student retreat. Later, in my first visit to her classroom as a participant observer, I wrote:

> On the wall the words and phrases why, imagine, creativity, with, dream, do it, explain your thinking are scattered. I see a beautiful tree made out of tissue paper with a leaf that says 7 C's of hope - caring is on another leaf. After all the students were finished their reflections Carmen turned their attention to the cover of a picture book on the smart board. After reading the book, as she turned the pages on the smart board, Carmen said, "I know we haven't talked about hope for a long time, but we have done figurative language. I want you to work in partners because 25 pages in a book would be far too long. . . . Write what you feel represents hope. Remember when Robin[62] (the student in Carmen's class who inspired Carmen after returning from the student-wide event with her writing about the value of hope) wrote a piece on hope at one of the events? It was a very well written piece with sentences of varying lengths. What are some places that make you feel hopeful? . . . Any other images come to mind? How about in school? . . . Is hope about getting a new bike? We talked about this before. . . . I

[62] Pseudonym

would like seven, no let's go with five things about hope. . . If you can, get similes and metaphors in your writing." (Field Notes, April 19, 2012)

During our second professional development session, Carmen told those of us sitting around the table on the morning of April 26, 2012 that she wished she heard more consistent language around hope messages at Brighton as she listened to other teacher participants tell stories of working with hope. I remember wanting to ask her more about what she meant when she made the comment, but I did not ask her because I did not want to interrupt the back and forth inquiring between the teachers at the time. Later, in our second research conversation, when I asked Carmen to tell me a story about her experiences of working with hope, she said:

> I don't know if it was last year or before that but we talk about hope in terms of social justice. I think that when students say, later on, "That is hope," or they are able to identify—that happened a few times. I took that risk. In the end you do not know how it is going to turn out. It is rewarding when you hear a student say months later, that's hope. . . . So that makes it worthwhile. . . . I gave students a personal pizza box—everybody had to write a positive message. (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012)

Although I was inspired by Carmen's enthusiasm to make hope explicit in her interactions with students, I was also aware of how her intentions bumped up against the stories of colleagues, administrations, parents, and districts about bringing hope to others through social justice projects. With this in mind I tentatively asked, "Can you tell me

ways that you use the hope-focused practices in your teaching?" at the end of our research conversation on March 25, 2013. Carmen responded with, "I wanted to tell you this. . . . Besides tying hope into social justice projects this is more of a personal classroom activity—only for us. We always start our talking circle with a compliment to the person beside you. . . . We do this because there are people who are down . . . . this helps the person get up there. . . . We had our first breakthrough because this is what I want. . . . I want to build each other's trust." I felt my eyes opening wider when Carmen shared how she reacted when a student told the class how she worried about her mom and brother and the difficulties of going back and forth between her mom's and dad's homes after their divorce. Carmen shared how she was not surprised to hear one boy tell the students how stressed he felt given his family's expectation for him to succeed given that Carmen "knew the community" but that she was surprised at how the students' stories "piggy backed each other" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). To help me make sense of her new experiences with her description of being in a talking circle[63], as a hope-focused practice in her classroom I created and reflected on one last word image using the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

[63] Carmen described a talking circle as sitting in a circle with her students to discuss ways of supporting each other as a team.

Figure 5.12. Word Image 12: Classroom activities only for us

Letting them know they are not the only one
Can work through it.
Crying because I related.
For me to tell kids my personal life—very powerful.

I think I mentioned before
did not want to be like my parents.
Stuff you go through in life—
want to become better person,
your own person.

So I said:
You have to focus on your relationship with brother.
That's how my brother and I are.

Good for my students
to hear my story.

Communicating with one another
My students and I—
student to student
Trust building with colleagues
or with students.
My goal with students.

As I reflected on Carmen's stories of the talking circle as a personal hope-focused classroom activity, I remembered the stories she shared about telephoning Mrs. Michaels on a Sunday afternoon. I remembered Carmen saying, "It is rare that you would get a call from a student, unless it is an absolute emergency. This is my fifth year of teaching and I don't think I've ever gotten a call from a student," (Research Conversation, March 30, 2012). I thought back also to her comments about "it being in the kids to give" (Research Conversation, July 25, 2012) given her own stories of helping students live out their parents' stories of bringing hope to others through social justice projects in her

district. I thought about her stories of calling Mrs. Michaels in relation to her stories about letting her students know "they are not the only one." I wondered about Carmen's hope to create a trusting space reflecting how she felt in Mrs. Michael's class.

I thought back to how I responded to those who asked about the poor and/or sick youth 'I must have been working with' when I started making hope visible and accessible in my interactions with youth. I remember telling those individuals that I believe we need to make hope visible and accessible in all classrooms given that we do not know how youth are coping with the expectations they feel being placed upon them. As I reflected on these wonders I thought back again on my own early experiences of working with teachers who created the 'hope circle' activity, which later became a strategy in the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource (LeMay et al., 2008). I thought back to when the teachers, who created the hope circle strategy, told me that they were not able to set goals with their students until they participated alongside students in activities like the hope circle. I remember these same teachers telling me that they were not afraid of opening a can of worms by allowing students to share their innermost hopes and fears. They told me that they felt they needed to connect to the hopes and fears that their students experienced to make sense of how they could support students in being and becoming. As I thought about Carmen encouraging her students to share stories that they felt others did not know as a way of supporting and trusting each other, I wondered how this connected to her own need to be and become who she needs to be. I pondered also how this experience might inform her feelings of acceptance with her Grade 6 colleagues who

she also mentions building trust. I wondered also how making spaces to share and inquire into her students' hopes and fears helped her sustain who she is and is becoming as a teacher beginning. I wondered how many more years she will feel inspired to create spaces for students to learn to support each others' hopes, given how she storied being in the classroom in our research conversation on April 30, 2012. I wondered if she will be able to continue to live out the talking circle story with her students as a hope-focused practice as a "personal classroom activity" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013).

Finally, I wondered most about what she did not or could not put into words—especially in the seventh word image when she said:

> It [service-learning project] did not get shut down in a bad way.
> Our principal putting his foot down.
> Would just open a can of worms.
>
> Might as well continue
> because that is what district wants.
>
> Way you explain to kids—
> Students understood.
> (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013)

I wondered this as I thought back to how much lighter she appeared on March 25, 2013 after worrying so much about how she was coping with not being able to go forward with the service-learning project that she and her students decided upon just before the Christmas break.

Chapter Six: New Understandings Across Two Narrative Accounts

Dewey (1934) suggests that, "we engage in inquiry to restore harmony and relieve the breaks and tensions of disequilibrium" (p. 15). I agree—especially when I think back to what inspired my research puzzle. I say this because I believe my research puzzle surfaced when I began to question how I storied the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) evolving in my making meaning alongside teachers and students—especially when I heard teachers tell me they were more interested in relationships with and between students than my need to work with outcomes for granting agencies. After checking with Sheila and Carmen to ensure that we represented their experiences in ways that made sense to them, I looked across their narrative accounts to unpack what I learned about their experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

This next chapter presents what I learned as I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts after my last research conversation with each of them. I start with the processes I used for looking across the accounts and then discuss the four resonant threads that surfaced in response to my research puzzle.

Resonances Across Accounts

As a way of attending to the resonances across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts, I purposefully laid the narrative accounts alongside each other and then went back into the narrative accounts, one at a time and reread across the plotlines that evolved

in our meaning making. As I read and reread the accounts, I stayed awake to what I noticed reverberating across and in-between the individual plotlines that surfaced in Carmen's and Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). I looked for a deeper and broader awareness of their experiences in relation to our meaning making. I called these patterns narrative threads because they resonated across and within Sheila and Carmen's life stories. Sometimes I felt like I was standing over the two narrative accounts as they sat alongside each other and at other times I felt like I was stepping into each account and plotline as a way of making sense of the narrative threads as they unfolded.

Wanting to ensure that I remained attentive to the "temporal, unfolding, contextual nature of the threads rather than the certainty of the threads as fixed, frozen, or context (life) independent" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 143), I created Venn diagrams to represent and document what I learned about Sheila and Carmen's life stories in relation to their hopes and fears, alongside the societal, district and school stories or expectations they experienced as they worked and imagined working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

The narrative threads of learning to live with hope in early childhood; being in the midst of living with hope; sharpening of their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999); and the courage to be (Tillich, 1952) became visible to me as I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts and attended to the research puzzle that asked what is the experience of teachers working with hope-focused practices?

Resonant thread 1: Learning to live with hope in early childhood.

As I looked across the two narrative accounts, I saw, first, how Sheila and Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) informed by their early life stories as we made sense of their experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). As Greene (1995) suggests:

> We are first cast into the world as embodied beings trying to understand. From particular situated locations, we open ourselves to fields of perception. Doing so, we begin to inhabit varied and always incomplete multiverses of forms, contours, structures, colors and shadows. We become present to them as consciousnesses in the midst of them, not as outside observers; and so we see aspects and profiles, but never totalities. (p. 73)

I felt this narrative thread resonating when Sheila and Carmen told stories about their parents and grandparents. I heard this thread as Sheila and Carmen storied their experiences alongside their parents and grandparents. I also heard this thread resonating in the stories told to Sheila and Carmen about events that occurred before they were born. For example, I thought of the stories that Carmen shared about her grandmother sending her mom to Canada from China to run the family business. I remember wondering about the stories Carmen's mom shared and perhaps did not share with Carmen about choosing to leave the family business to work out of her home in the same way that I wondered about the stories that Sheila's parents shared and did not share about their experiences of learning the rules, as first generation Canadians. I thought about Sheila's parents trusting

and expecting her to be responsible to expectations as they encouraged her to venture further and further outside the neighbourhood to learn from her experiences.

As I stayed awake to Sheila and Carmen's life stories, I was able to make sense of how they entered the world in the midst of dominant familial, cultural, institutional stories that informed how they embodied a multidimensional way of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating with hope as a way of learning alongside (Bateson, 1994). As Bateson suggests, it seemed that Sheila and Carmen learned along the way by "stringing together elements of previous knowledge, attending to catch every possible cue, and exploring different translations of the familiar, to improvise responsibly and with love" (p. 6). I felt that Sheila and Carmen learned to embody ways of thinking, acting, feeling and relating in the way that Bateson suggests we need to learn as "an artful and aesthetic pattern of attention . . . that turns and turns again, embracing nature in all its diversity and other person with all their potentials" (p. 110) long before they engaged in conversations with me and other colleagues about the value of making hope explicit and accessible in our curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

As I thought about Sheila and Carmen's early experiences of learning alongside I thought about Van Manen's (1983) pedagogic hope as animating "the way a pedagogue lives with a child, and it gives meaning to the way the adult stands in the world, represents the world to the child, takes responsibility for the world and embodies or stylizes the forms of knowledge through which the world is known and explained to

children" (p. ii). Van Manen's quote seemed to represent Sheila and Carmen's stories of being alongside their parents and for Carmen, also alongside her grandmother.

As I reflected further about learning to live with hope in early childhood in relation to Sheila and Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), I thought about Sheila inviting a student to come stand by her so that he could see from her place instead of telling him that his response was incorrect. Although Sheila did not tell stories of her parents inviting her to stand beside them, I wondered if Sheila felt her parents gently nudging her in the way she appeared to nudge the student in her class to shift his focus by moving his whole body to another place—to a place where he could still be incorrect because he did not see what Sheila saw. In this way I saw Sheila attending to her students' need to look from many different vantage points as a way of learning along the way like she did alongside her parents. I saw this same way of being in relationship with her students in the way she imagined working with journals to inspire her students to reflect on their thoughts, actions, relationships and feelings as they worked toward their hopes by setting goals.

Similarly, when I reflected on Carmen's early life stories her stories of sometimes helping her mother to create organized places for the children in her mom's day home to display their artistic representations as a part of the group in the same way that I heard and observed Carmen creating a homey atmosphere where students were expected to contribute responsibly to both the team and their own learning. I also noted how Carmen storied her experiences of inspiring her students to become creative risk takers. As I

looked across Carmen's narrative account I noticed Carmen encouraging her students to create artistic representations like the clouds as a way of enjoying learning and making connections that she hopes they will remember in the future in the same way that she enjoys being a creative risk taker who is always thinking of new ideas.

As I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts I thought about how Sheila and Carmen appeared to embody a way of being with hoping from their early life stories. With that in mind, I turned to a second resonant narrative thread in their narrative accounts.

Resonant thread 2: In the midst of embodying hope.

The second resonant thread I noticed as I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts was that they embodied a multidimensional way of being with hope in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). Although Sheila and Carmen told me, in initial research conversations, that I might not see evidence of the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in their classrooms, that was not the case. I start what I learned from being alongside Sheila on my first visit to her classroom, as a participant observer on January 19, 2012. In that visit I observed Sheila explaining and showing students what she learned when she researched how Van Gogh's painting inspired a songwriter to write a song. She told her students that she researched Van Gogh's life story because she was curious to know what she might learn from a troubled artist's life stories.

Later, when Sheila invited the student to come stand by her, so that he could see from her vantage point, I saw her "caring with" her students. I saw her attending, in loving ways to how she could inspire her students to remain open to the possibilities of looking in other ways and from other places to see things as they might be otherwise (Greene, 1995). I saw her as helping students imagine themselves as learners in the making—learning from their perceptions as well as learning to appreciate how others brought hope to them through their actions by providing tickets to events that the students would not otherwise have had an opportunity to experience.

Sheila embodied hope in order to create a community where students learned to attend to hopeful ways of relating, thinking, feeling and acting alongside, as character education leaders. I also saw Carmen's stories as embodied expressions of being alongside with hope as she began to make sense of her experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). I watched students support each other when Carmen was busy working with one of the book club groups in the same way they did when they were working in their science groups. These moments, in her narrative account, drew my attention to how Carmen communicated hopeful messages about being alongside in the moment and in the future as a way of living with hope as a way of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating.

Carmen's decision to volunteer to participate in the professional development sessions for Brighton also drew my attention to her living in the midst of embodying hopeful ways of being alongside. Carmen storied herself being drawn to the ongoing,

professional development sessions as she listened to students story their experiences of creating hope masks in a student district-wide retreat on an earlier date. Looking back over her narrative account, I remember the stories Carmen told in the first professional development session. In that session she storied her experiences of being inspired by what she felt, saw and heard when the two students returned from the hope mask making. As I thought about Carmen's stories, I returned to Sarbin's (2004) writing about "living out a story . . . as action oriented and thus embodied" (p. 14). As I reflected on Sarbin's argument that embodied actions follow the feelings "arising from the reader's [listener's] placing himself or herself in a particular role" (p. 15) I had a better understanding of what I felt when Carmen shared her experiences of being alongside the two students who wrote about the value of hope after participating in the hope mask making session.

With Carmen's experiences in mind, I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts again to make sense of the resonant thread of being in the midst of embodying hope as they paid attention to their own hope and to the hope of their students. As I did this I began to understand how Sheila and Carmen worked hard to create a class milieu (Schwab, 1962) that embraced the 7 C's of hope as they made sense of the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). Sheila and Carmen lived, told, retold and relived stories of caring with and for others. In doing so they were creating communities where everyone was responsible for their own and others' wellbeing through making and keeping commitments, through working at making sense of coping

as a way of attending to hope and hoping, and through being creative as a way of being open to possibilities.

However, as I reflected on how the thread of being in the midst of embodying hope became apparent to me, I thought about the bumping up moments I felt, moments which contributed to this narrative thread becoming visible across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts. With that in mind, I inquired into the bumping up places to determine if there was anything else I might learn from looking across. As I looked, I noticed how Sheila made sense of being passed over for leadership positions and found happiness where she was (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012) alongside her refusal to feel guilty for not finishing all the paper work as she made sense of her colleague's experience of choosing not to return to the classroom (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012). I thought about her making sense of the increasing emphasis on results reviews and of not being able to get through the program of studies as she encouraged her students and parents to stand by her as she imagined working with journals and then worked with journals in the classroom and as a tool to communicate with parents (Research Conversations, July 3, 2012 and November 26, 2012). I noticed how Carmen struggled as she wondered if she could sustain herself for another five years in the classroom as she strove to create meaningful learning activities for her students like the ones she experienced with Mrs. Michaels. I noticed also how Carmen made sense of the number of social justice projects coming in from the community at Brighton while waiting to hear from the administration team as she and her students worked together to

conduct their hope needs assessment and social justice project (Research Conversations, April 30, 2012; July 25, 2012; August 28, 2012; December 10, 2012).

As I looked across, and more specifically at the bumping up places that informed and were informed by the plotlines in Sheila and Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), I wondered about Sheila and Carmen being in the midst of living with hope as a way of making sense of and being able to sustain who they were and were becoming in relation to Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) "in-classroom" and "out-of-classroom" places[64] (p. 14). As I thought about how Sheila, Carmen and I made sense of the bumping up moments between their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) in the in-classroom place, in relation to the increasing expectations funneling down the metaphoric conduit (Clandinin & Connnelly, 1995) on to the out-of-classroom place, my wonders about what inspired Sheila and Carmen to choose to continue participating in the professional development sessions resurfaced—especially as I began to attend to the third narrative thread.

Resonant thread 3: Sharpening an embodied way of being with hope.

The third narrative thread that I noticed, as I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts, was that their embodied ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating with hope became more intentional, more focused and sharper as we made sense of their

[64] "In-classroom" places are places where teachers feel safe to live out their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). "Out-of-classroom" places, on the other hand, are the shared professional places where teachers are expected to hold particular knowledge that represents the dominant stories of school, shaped by policies, theories and research funneled down through the metaphoric conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). As we made sense of Sheila and Carmen's living, telling, retelling and reliving of working with hope-focused practices, Carmen and Sheila became more aware of intentionally paying attention to hope and hoping in their interactions. They also appeared to become more aware of the effects of embodying hope more intentionally and in some cases, explicitly, as they made sense of the increasing expectations they were experiencing on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

I start with Sheila's stories of making sense of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al, 2008) during our research conversation on January 24, 2012. In this conversation Sheila storied herself using hope explicitly even though she told me in our research conversation on January 7, 2012 that I might not see examples of the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in her classroom. Sheila said, "When I looked at the 7 C's of hope and I started to kind of be explicit with hope, a little bit more, with some of the things I did, and I thought . . . this is exactly what I do, only now I just rephrase the question. So now . . . I might ask what kind of hopes and dreams do you think are in your picture?" (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012).

A little later in the same conversation she reflected back on doing the Van Gogh lesson on the day I visited. She added:

> Two years ago I would have done that lesson and I would have said, "Why do we still like his art today or why do you think people like his art?" . . . . When I realized [I was doing this lesson during your visit] I thought . . . it fits so nicely

with what we were doing. But that wasn't intentional. I was doing the Van Gogh thing before I realized. . . . Maybe before I would not have seen the hope piece as quickly as I did now." (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

During our third research conversation on July 3, 2012 when Sheila imagined working with hope and more specifically with the hope tree in order to help her students work toward meaningful goals so that her students would not be disappointed as she was when she missed leadership opportunities, I remembered our earlier conversations about learning the expectations alongside, and from, our parents. I also observed her creating opportunities for her students to "make a decision that works for them bit-by-bit. . . If you do not teach them some alternatives and some other things to do they might get stuck in that rut and not be able to get out of it" (Research Conversation, July 3, 2012) when she worked with goal setting in their morning journals (Participant Observation, June 5, 2012). When she said, "Rather than just going through life and just stumbling over things as they come but being prepared and ready and able to do something to the best of your ability," (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012) I thought about Sheila storying herself using hope to prepare her students for the curves in life, that she, like her parents, could not anticipate. As we talked about how she worked with hope and imagined making hope more explicit with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) she began to reconnect to her hoping self (Larsen & Larsen, 2004) in relation to who she was and was becoming. It was in the reconnecting to her hoping self that I saw her becoming more aware and intentional in attending to her own and others' hope needs.

I listened as Sheila storied herself being inspired by Anne,[65] her colleague in the professional development sessions, to make learning more meaningful for her students with animotos and reflective journaling. On July 3, 2012 Sheila storied herself forward working with students that she did not see as reflective as her current group of students when she said, "They are not as thoughtful as this year's group but they will get there." I heard her saying that she would work alongside next year's group of students so that they also had an opportunity to reflect on and learn from their experiences instead of "doing worksheets" (Research Conversation, November 26, 2012). I also noticed how Sheila intentionally incorporated hope language as a way to make learning meaningful and relevant for her students. To do that Sheila had to get to know her students and colleagues in the same way that she got to know the contours of the hiking trail by slowing down to notice where she was, instead of finishing the trail ahead of the group. As I thought back to our many conversations about making learning meaningful and relevant, I also thought about our many conversations about learning our own limits from our ongoing meaning making alongside—whether we are on the hiking trail or trying to meet the increasing expectations being placed on educators to be all and do all for all. Thinking about how she used journals to help students attend to their feelings, hopes, dreams and fears as a reflective tool, I remembered her comment, "We know students will not learn if we just tell them the answer. Students need to try things out for themselves" (Research Conversation, April 9, 2012).

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[65] Pseudonym

To help me make sense of how Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) became sharper and more vivid with hope I thought back to how she storied herself as a creative risk taker, always thinking of ideas early in our sensemaking. Later when I heard how disappointed she was, on December 10, 2012 when she and her students shelved the social justice project they planned after conducting a hope needs assessment, I felt she was trying to hold on to her stories of choosing to be different. However, I did not hear her giving up, when she said, "Wasn't a complete can't do it" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). I heard an opening in her comment that showed that there was still hope and that Carmen was staying open to the possibilities.

When we met on March 25, 2012, I noted how "much lighter [than] she appeared since our last conversation" (Field Note, March 26, 2012). I also noted how she restoried her experiences. For example, I heard her story how she worked with students who participated in the school-wide healthy initiatives project. Instead of working against the school story that storied all Grade 6 classes participating in the same social justice projects that either the parents or teachers decided ahead of time, Carmen storied herself as working with students in extra-curricular projects to create school-wide projects that were meaningful to who they were and were becoming.

Attending to the silences.

When I heard Carmen restory her experiences about the Provincial Achievement Tests after being "helped by her grade partners" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013), I felt a slight shift in her stories that I felt contributed to a sharpening of her belief

that her students needed to be responsible for their learning. I say this because in our research conversation on March 25, 2013 she said:

> Have to remind myself—
> Kids [are] ones writing tests.
> They have to study.
> Gave my full effort.
>
> If back in Grade 5—
> I would be fine.

However, since there were things that Carmen did not or could not tell me about "having to remind" herself and "gave my full effort" I can only say that even though I felt these slight shifts, I could not be certain about whether or not they were shifts in Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). As I thought about not being certain whether there were shifts in Carmen's stories to live by, I thought back to the wonderings I had when I heard Sheila's final comments in our research conversation on February 6, 2013 when she said:

> Never thought about hope in terms of lifestyle.
>
> Hope message can be a lifestyle.
>
> Living it.

I wondered about her decision to take a leave to travel as I listened to her talk about "living hope". I wondered also about what she did not say in her stories of "finding the happiness where you are at" in relation to being passed over for leadership positions. I wondered also about her decision to open her classroom door to become the principal designate. With these wonderings in mind, I went back into one of the first interim

research texts, dated September 13, 2012. I found the following excerpt of Sheila making sense of how she sees herself working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008).

> I do the things that I think are important. This year I really made a conscious effort to be not doing so many things out of the classroom. I used to be the principal designate and the year before I was the acting principal. I was called out of my classroom a lot. (Research Conversation, January 24, 2012)

In our July 3, 2012 conversation, Sheila said, "Maybe the hope stuff gave me more confidence to close the door on some of that other stuff that goes on because our school is such a busy place." Later, on November 26, 2012 Sheila shared stories of becoming the principal designate once again. In these stories she suggested that since, "We've got a really good atmosphere," she felt she could take on the responsibility again. In this way, I observed Sheila scanning the horizon to determine if it was a good time to open her door once again. I saw Sheila's stories to live with hope sharpening when she consciously chose when to close and open her classroom door as a way of protecting her students and herself from the hope suckers on the other side of the classroom door. It seemed, to me, when I heard her say, "Maybe the hope stuff gave me more confidence to close the door," that she was beginning to restory herself as able to establish more solid boundaries to protect her students and herself at Grafton, in the way she was able to in her personal life. However, these were my wonderings. For now, I do not know what precipitated her leave of absence to travel but I do know that she was taking a risk and

perhaps stepping out of her comfort zone because as she told me on February 6, 2013, her school district could not ensure she would be able to return to Grafton at the end of her leave in a year's time.

Although I felt Carmen's and Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) shifting ever so slightly in ways that I can only describe as a sharpening and refocusing their thinking, acting, feeling and relating, I cannot be certain. As a narrative inquirer I was okay with not being certain, given that in "narrative thinking, interpretations of events can always be otherwise" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 31).

As I thought about this reaffirming or sharpening of their stories of being with hope in both Sheila and Carmen's stories, I was reminded of Larsen and Stege's (2012) research with counselling clients. Larsen and Stege found that clients developed new understandings of themselves and their potential when they were able to recreate ways of being in the world that they perceived as personally hopeful when they experienced "safety/ acceptance, feeling heard and understood, and evidence of counselor investment" (p. 47). Although Larsen and Stege studied how the therapeutic relationship contributed to hopefulness and not working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), I wondered, if, like the counselling clients, Sheila and Carmen felt they could recreate and build on personally relevant ways of being with hope when they were encouraged to participate in narrative reflective practices (Clandinin, et al., 2011) as they worked with the hope-focused practices in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

I move to the last thread as I attended to how their way of being with hope appeared to become sharper and more focused. In so doing, I noticed that by reaffirming their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) with hope in a more focused and intentional way, Sheila and Carmen appeared to become more courageous to be who they were and becoming in life affirming and sustaining ways.

Resonant thread 4: The courage to be (Tillich, 1952).

As Sheila and Carmen sharpened and focused how they embodied hope in their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), I noticed them becoming what I could only describe as more courageous in their being and becoming with hope.

I sought out Tillich's 1952 book titled *The Courage to Be.* Tillich states that courage, according to Aristotle, is "the affirmation of one's essential nature, one's inner aim or *entelechy,* but it is an affirmation which has in itself the character of "in spite of". It includes the possible and, in some cases, the unavoidable sacrifice of elements which also belong to one's being but which, if not sacrificed, would prevent us from reaching our actual fulfillment" (Tillich, 1952, p. 16). As I read Tillich's work further, I saw how his sense making around vitality, intentionality, and self-affirmation in relation to courage became more pronounced in Carmen and Sheila's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

In our last research conversation on February 6, 2013 Sheila shared that she decided to take a leave of absence to travel even though she was not sure if the district

rules regarding returning, after a leave, would allow her to return to Grafton. Instead of worrying about not being able to return to where she was comfortable, I felt Sheila decided to live a dream that we talked about in our first research conversation back in January 2012. However, I wondered if she was also thinking about her friend who chose not to return to the classroom after being forced to take a leave due to a stress related illness.

I felt Carmen becoming more courageous to be who she was and was becoming as a way of choosing to be different, and yet remaining open to what was possible when she storied herself boldly going forward after she had to tell her students that they could not carry out their hope-focused social justice project. On March 25, 2013 Carmen storied her students creating school-wide activities as she had imagined in our first conversations when she said, "The students do everything. They call meetings on the intercom they plan the events for health and wellness. For February they had something everyday" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). A little later she shared a story of being more courageous alongside parents when she said, "I have parents asking, 'When's the snack shack opening?' I just tell them I don't know like we are still working out the logistics of it." I noted also how Carmen's story of being alongside and in relationship with, as a support to her students and colleagues shifted ever so slightly when she said:

Have to remind myself
Kids [are] ones writing tests.
Want to do well
Have to study.
Gave my full effort.

Help of grade partners
Teaching style changed.
If back in Grade 5
be fine.
Not stressed about provincial
achievement tests.

(Research Conversation - March 25, 2013)

I also felt Carmen storying herself as living more courageously in the midst of being with hope when she shared personal stories with her students "for the first time ever" in the talking circle (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). As I listened to stories of sharing her personal stories with her students, I imagined her strengthening who she was and was becoming in relation to how she had to be alongside her colleagues as a creative risk taker and leader inspiring others to see how things might be otherwise (Bateson, 1994) despite her experiences with her principal and her colleagues outside her classroom.

It seemed, as I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts that Sheila and Carmen began to honour and celebrate their way of being with hope as a way of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating in a way that I understood as the courage to be alongside other conceptions of hope in education. By this I mean that living, telling, retelling, and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) who they were and were becoming with the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope enabled Sheila and Carmen to embrace who they were and were becoming alongside the dominant institutional, cultural, and familial stories of instilling or injecting hope either for salvation or to ensure the attainment of certain outcomes or transformations. In so doing, Sheila and Carmen

appeared to make sense of how they lived with the goal-setting conception, critical theory conception and faith-based conception of hope in education while embracing a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope.

However, given the moments when I felt the silences in Sheila's and Carmen's narrative accounts, as they made sense of their experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008), I do wonder what I missed hearing.

Thinking back to my experiences with most teachers and adults in the hoping profession, the word resistance to or fear of making hope visible and accessible often surfaces—especially, during the initial stages of our work together. I do not make this claim lightly as a narrative inquirer who is very aware of what happens when we ignore experience and/or reduce and formalize experiences into universal categories. When I think about my experiences of working with hope over the last 12 years I suggest that the goal setting, critical theory and faith-based conceptions of hope are most widely embraced as a way of being with hope in education.

As Sheila, Carmen and I made sense of the tensions they experienced as they worked with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in relation to the other conceptions or ways of being with hope, that is with the goal setting theory for Sheila and with social justice projects in a faith-based school, I noticed what felt like a re-awakening to Sheila and Carmen's need to be in relationship with, as we stayed awake to their life stories in relation to their experiences of making hope visible and accessible in their interactions. For Sheila it was an awakening to the notion that she needed spaces like the

professional development spaces we created over time and with others as we lived, told, retold, and sometimes restoried our experiences so that she could imagine another way of working with reflective journals to connect with her students and her students' parents. For Carmen, it was the realization that she needed to create hope-focused activities wherein she shared personal stories with her students as she did in the talking circle and coming to understand that she needed to assert herself with the school administration to make sure that she would be able to participate in the weekly conversations with her Grade 6 counterparts. As I thought about how Sheila and Carmen storied their experiences of working with the hope-focused practices toward the end of our time together Tillich's assertion that "the courage to be is essentially always the courage to be as part and the courage to be as oneself, in interdependence" (p. 92) came to mind.

Sheila and Carmen storied themselves awakening to the fact that they needed to share and inquire into their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) with their colleagues as they made hope visible and accessible. I believe Sheila summed it up best when she said, "Different perspectives help you realize things you can do. It is hard to be by yourself" (Research Conversation, February 6, 1967). As I listened to Carmen story her experiences of the hope-focused practice that was just for her class, I heard the teachers' comments that sparked my research puzzle reverberating forward—especially when she said, "I think it was good for the kids to hear my story but it is the communicating with one another so my students and I, student to student and just that

trust building with one another . . . with your colleagues or with students" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013).

Tying the Threads Together

After looking across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts I came to new understandings about Sheila and Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). As I reflected more closely on the four threads that surfaced as I looked across their early stories; being in the midst of embodying hope; sharpening their stories of being with hope; and the courage to be (Tillich, 1952), I pondered Bateson's (1994) notion of homecoming. Bateson (1994) puts forth that "discovering the connections and regularities within knowledge you already have is another kind of homecoming, a recognition that feels like a glorious game or a profound validation" (pp. 205–206). With Bateson's notion of learning as homecoming, in mind, I present what I learned from being alongside Sheila and Carmen personally, practically, and socially/theoretically.

Chapter Seven: Learning as a Returning Home

The research puzzle for this study surfaced when I questioned how I storied the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) evolving in my making meaning alongside teachers and students—especially when I heard teachers tell me they were more interested in relationships with and between students than my need to work with outcomes for granting agencies. I realized that I needed to return to graduate studies to make sense of this tension. As I wrote the story of my experiences with Margaret and Rachel, in preparation for my candidacy in September 2012, I found myself pondering a second reoccurring tension that I felt over the last 12 years. This tension revolved around my belief that others viewed me as an expert on hope and hoping when I storied myself as composing a way of being and knowing about hope and hoping alongside. As I made sense of being viewed as an expert when I needed to co-construct meaning alongside, a third reoccurring tension of worrying about imposing the hope-focused practices evolved as I unpacked the story I wrote at the beginning of this dissertation.

A Reflective Turn To Position Myself in the Research Study

Four years after enrolling in the doctoral program I glanced over at my bookshelf in my new home by the lake. My eyes rested on the author's names: Clandinin, Connelly, Dewey, Greene, Bateson, Bruner, and Tillich were names on a few of the book spines in the section of my bookshelf designated for this research study. I also noted the binders with articles from my graduate courses sitting next to copies of colleagues'

dissertations on the shelf directly below. I felt the corners of my mouth lifting upward as I thought about my conversations with the authors of the dissertations. All authors were from the CRTED Tuesday table and two of the authors, Sonia and Claire, were a part of my response group. I walked over to the shelf and picked up another binder, which had all the articles arranged into categories I created to help me make sense of the theories that informed my research. Flipping through each section I paused for a few minutes to rethink what I gleaned from the sections. Closing the binder I glanced over to my collage-making table before sitting back down at my writing table. Reaching over to that table I restacked the coloured sheets of sponged paper and put the scissors and glue back in the drawer. I looked longingly at the large sheets of paper and assortment of coloured markers, wondering when I might find the time to return to the collage-making table to break through the structures, caricatures and diagrams of my own experiences as a way of attending peripherally (Bateson, 1994). Just as I was about to move to start creating a Carlyle collage to help me make sense of the "so what?" and "who cares?" that all researchers must answer or to formulate responses to the personal, practical and social/theoretical justifications for this research study, my eye caught the glistening blue of the lake outside my study window. Instead of moving over to the materials table I sat for a bit longer gazing at the oranges, yellows and red that foreground the lake where I first learned to learn alongside.

I decided it was time for me to walk the block back to my childhood home for Thanksgiving dinner with my family at the table where I learned to wonder and imagine

how things might be otherwise. As I got up I contemplated what I came away with from being alongside Sheila and Carmen as we made sense of their experiences of working with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). I felt myself taking a reflective turn to Bateson's (1994) notion of learning as a homecoming as a way of thinking about the personal, practical and social/theoretical justifications for my research, that is, "personally, in terms of why this narrative inquiry matters to us as individuals; practically, in terms of what difference this research might make to practice; and socially or theoretically, in terms of what difference this research might make to theoretical understandings or to making situations more socially just" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 35).

Travelling Along the Möbius Strip (Bateson, 1994)

To do that, I returned to Bateson's (1994) writing about learning in relation to traveling along the Möbius strip. Over time, the image of three Mobius strips appeared. Sometimes I thought about the strip in terms of Sheila and Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as I thought about the personal, practical and social/theoretical justifications for my research study. Other times, I thought about my position as a developer, facilitator and researcher and more specifically in relation to who I was as a narrative inquirer. Like Bateson, I realized that "each return over the same ground represented layers of change: in me, in my manuscript, in the landscape" (p. 131) such that:

> What we call the familiar is built up in layers to a structure known so deeply that it is taken for granted and virtually impossible to observe without the help of contrast. Encountering familiar issues in a strange setting is like returning on a second circuit of the Möbius strip and coming to the experience from the opposite side. Seen from a contrasting point of view or seen suddenly through the eyes of an outsider, one's own familiar patterns can become accessible to choice and criticism. With yet another return, what seemed radically different is revealed as part of a common space. (p. 31).

I share next how these reflective learning(s) resurfaced as the various arrangements of Möbius strips unfolded and refolded back over themselves while moving forward simultaneously. In other words I share what I learned as I made sense of what I knew tacitly (Polanyi, 1958) but could not explain about making hope visible and accessible in our interactions until I attended to Sheila and Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). Then I discuss these learning(s) in relation to the personal, practical and social/theoretical justifications for my study.

Emerging Learning(s)

I came away with three learning(s) as I attended to Sheila and Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008). I learned that hope matters, but it cannot be imposed. Second, I learned that attending to Sheila and Carmen's experiences with and through the commonplaces of narrative inquiry

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) helped me to better understand what I meant by the notion of a narrative conceptualization of hope. Third, I learned that the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope appears to inspire competing stories of living with the dominant stories of hope and hoping in education.

Learning 1: Hope matters but it cannot be imposed.

Hope matters

I knew as a hope-focused practitioner and scholar that hoping is necessary to life and living. I knew also that hope and hoping is an elusive concept that means different things to different people in different situations. I knew that because whenever I presented on the value and nature of hope and hoping over the last 12 years I repeatedly cited research from the goal setting, critical theory, and faith-based conceptions of hope in education depending on the audience. Therefore, when I began this research study, I understood that "the task is no longer to demonstrate that hope makes a difference but to explore how those differences are made and how they can be engendered and sustained" (Jevne, 1999, p. 16).

As I made sense of Sheila and Carmen's experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) I noticed how Sheila and Carmen embraced and became more intentional in attending to hopeful ways of thinking, feeling, acting and relating from their early life stories. I observed how Sheila and Carmen imagined how

they might work more intentionally with the hope-focused practices and then proceeded to do so in several ways.

I reflected again on Sheila's statement, "Different perspectives help you realize things you can do. It is hard to be by yourself" (Research Conversation, February 6, 2013) and Carmen's stories of creating an opportunity to build "trust with one another . . . with your colleagues or with students" (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013), I found myself wondering about the value of hope and hoping in relation to being open to different perspectives and being in trusting relationships. For Sheila, this meant using weekly journals to initiate conversations with parents in the hopes of supporting her students to be responsible and aware of expectations as they navigated their landscapes as new Canadians after hearing how Anne used journals with her students in our ongoing professional development sessions. For Carmen, this meant working with her students to conduct hope needs assessments to determine ways of "caring and building relationships with[66]" others, as opposed to raising funds as a way of "caring for" others.

To help me make sense of what I learned from Sheila and Carmen's experiences, I turned to Bovens' (1999) philosophical writing on the value of hope and more specifically on the relationship between hope, fear, love and self-worth. Bovens wrote ~~that~~ "if hoping and fearing for another person's well-being are constitutive of loving him or her, then hoping and fearing for one's own well-being may well be constitutive of

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[66] Carmen and I had long conversations about the differences between caring with and caring for after we created tableaus about "caring with" during one of the professional development sessions. These conversations continued into the second year when we talked about social justice projects as fundraising projects in the second professional development session in May 2012.

loving one's own self. And at least on some understanding of the concepts involved, what such loving one's own self amounts to is precisely having a sense of self-worth" (p. 677). Self-worth is not something that I thought much about as we engaged in this research study. However, the more I contemplated Sheila and Carmen's stories of curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) after looking across their narrative accounts, I remembered Sheila and Carmen's stories about creating meaningful and purposeful experiences for their students as a way of attending to who their students were and were becoming. I thought about how Sheila and Carmen storied their experiences of becoming more intentional in finding ways to make hope visible and accessible in their interactions with students and in their own lives. I thought about how they attended to creating educative experiences (Dewey, 1938) so as to promote desirable future experiences. At the same time, I wondered about the possibilities of shifting perceptions of self worth as hope and hoping are made visible in our life stories—especially as I thought back to the student who Sheila invited to stand by her so that he could see from her place and to the students who problem solved with Carmen.

Wondering with instead of imposing

Before embarking on this research study and until the second and last professional development sessions with Sheila and Carmen, I worried that as a hope-focused facilitator I concentrated on the learners' experiences of working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) instead of introducing them to the practices from the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource. However, as, my journal entries demonstrated, I

realized that teachers, like Sheila and Carmen wanted to share and inquire into their stories instead of participating in activities that I prepared for them. I especially remember the moment Sheila's colleagues chose to continue sharing and inquiring into their lived, told, retold and relived stories instead of participating in the reflection activity that I planned for them in the second professional development session. When I met with teachers in Carmen's district a couple of months later, one of the teachers in the ongoing professional development session wondered what students learned when social justice projects focused on raising money for less fortunate individuals. Hearing her wonder, I let myself relax, knowing that I did not have to "be the expert in hope and hoping". I realized that as a hope-focused facilitator I needed to attend to the bumping up moments that arose in the teachers' living, telling and retelling during our professional development sessions.

Just before beginning this chapter I awoke to the fact that Sheila and Carmen did not refer, once, to the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource over the last year and a half~ even though I worked hard, initially to inspire them to do so. Awakening to this reminded me of the ongoing tensions I experienced throughout the research study about imposing the hope-focused practices as a way of being and knowing. Yet, when I reflected backwards, it seemed that Sheila and Carmen were able to make sense of being in the midst of living with hope as they worked with the hope-focused practices without feeling that they had to make reference to the Nurturing Hopeful Souls resource. Instead

they imagined *as if* (Sarbin, 2004) and then proceeded to make sense of how they could integrate hope-focused practices into their living in the midst with hope.

When I thought more about how Sheila and Carmen were able to imagine *as if* (Sarbin, 2004) and then work with the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) in ways that appeared to inspire them to honour who they were and were becoming, I remembered the many conversations I had with Dr. Clandinin before my candidacy. In those conversations Dr. Clandinin and I discussed how the hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) provide a framework from which to make sense of working with hope and hoping, in the same way that *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and story in Qualitative Research* provides narrative inquirers with the initial foundation for narrative inquirers to continue building new understandings. With that in mind, I believe that making hope visible and accessible in our curriculum making with and through the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) inspires the courage to live with hope, in life sustaining ways, which is what I turn to discuss next.

Learning 2: Attending with the commonplaces of narrative inquiry inspires an understanding of a narrative conceptualization of hope as an embodied lived experience.

When it was time for me to consider what difference my research would make, I found myself returning to Estola's (2003) notion of "hope as work". I first read Estola's study that examined how student teachers constructed their teacher identities from the

perspective of hope when I began my conversations with teachers who wanted to make hope visible in their interactions. Since I was more interested in the experiences of teachers who worked with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) and not about the teachers' stories from the perspective of hope, I set Estola's study aside when I began this doctoral study. However, as I began to write this last chapter, I reflected on Estola's (2003) assertion that "the students' stories reflected a solid faith in teachers' ability to help themselves only if they keep their hope" (p. 199) I thought about how Sheila and Carmen's stories of "being in the midst of" thinking, feeling, acting and relating with hope sharpened and became more intentional as they inquired into their stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) over the last two and a half years. I say two and a half years because I made time during our professional development sessions to share and inquire into the stories we told and retold of working with the hope-focused practices the year before they agreed to participate in the research study. As we made sense of their experiences I began to rethink the hope-focused practice of reflection, given that the teachers and I spent more time reflecting on the stories that we lived, told, retold and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990) and less on having me share new ways of working with the hope-focused practice of reflection. On April 15, 2012, I wrote the following in my journal:

> As I write about reflection as a hope-focused practice and as a way of making sense of my understanding of narrative inquiry as a pedagogical tool that can occur alongside the reflection, I find myself pondering the notion of a narrative

> understanding of knowledge that unfolds over time as meaning is constructed from inquiring into our stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Later, on April 21, 2012, I wrote the following as a way of making sense of what I was coming to understand about narrative reflection (Freeman, 2010; Clandinin, et al., 2011) in relation to the original hope-focused practice of reflection (LeMay, et al., 2008):

> Reflecting, inquiring into and responding to each others' stories enables us to connect to and inspire hopeful thoughts, actions, feelings, and interactions, which, in turn, influences our own feelings of hopefulness.
>
> Reflecting, inquiring, and responding into our own and others' stories makes it possible for us to cope with present circumstances and imagine our way forward in personally meaningful ways.

After I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts I found myself returning to wonder about narrative inquiry as pedagogy. I thought about how Sheila and Carmen were able to build on who they were and were becoming as they lived in the midst of thinking, feeling, acting and relating with hope as a way of being and knowing as an embodied lived experience. They made sense of their experiences of hoping "as a way of feeling, a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way relating [sic] to oneself and one's world" (Farran et al., 1995, p. 6) and as "a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful" (Stephenson, 1991, p. 1459).

I also thought about the complexities of narrative inquiry as pedagogy and the possibilities of imagining *as if* (Sarbin, 2004). Sarbin writes "imaginings are induced by stories read or stories told, that imaginings are instances of attenuated role-taking, that attenuated role-taking requires motoric actions that produce kinesthetic cues and other embodiments, and that embodiments become a part of the total context from which persons decide how to live their lives" (p. 17). I agree with Huber, Caine, Huber, and Steeves (2013) who wrote "thinking narratively about pedagogy is a complex undertaking," (p. 227). As I co-composed narrative accounts with Sheila and Carmen I became increasingly aware of how "stories continue to be composed with and without our presence" (p. 227), which requires, in turn, the "asking of hard questions about what is educative (Dewey, 1938) in the composing of lives" (p. 227). I agree because when I thought about coming to understand how I embraced narrative inquiry as a methodology and pedagogy in this research study, I remembered how the research puzzle created a space for Sheila, Carmen and I to make sense of the tensions that arose when Sheila and Carmen's stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) bumped up against the dominant stories of hope in education. With that in mind, I turned my attention to this third learning.

Learning 3: The Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope makes it possible to live alongside the dominant conceptions of hope in education.

It seemed, as I looked across Sheila and Carmen's narrative accounts that Sheila and Carmen began to honour and celebrate their way of being with hope as a way of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating in a way that I understood as the courage to be alongside other conceptions of hope. By this I mean that living, telling, retelling, and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) who they were and were becoming with the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope enabled Sheila and Carmen to embrace who they were and were becoming alongside the dominant institutional, cultural, and familial stories of instilling or injecting hope either for salvation or to ensure the attainment of certain outcomes or transformations. In so doing, Sheila and Carmen appeared to make sense of how they lived with the goal-setting conception, critical theory conception and faith-based conception of hope in education while embracing a Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope.

Thinking back to my experiences with most teachers and adults in the hoping profession, the phrases *resistance to* or *fear of* making hope visible often surfaced—especially, during the initial stages of our work together. When I think about my experiences of working with hope over the last 12 years I suggest that the goal setting, critical theory and faith-based conceptions of hope are most widely embraced as a way of being with hope in education.

For that reason, I put forth that the goal setting, critical theory and faith-based conceptions of hope in education are dominant narratives (Lindemann Nelson, 1995). Since the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope is not a well known way of working with hope and hoping on the current professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), I put forth that it might be viewed as a counterstory (Lindemann Nelson, 1995) or way of working with hope in education. However, because Sheila and Carmen's experiences with the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope did not appear to undermine the other conceptions of hope in education as counterstories sometimes do but enabled them to sharpen their way of being with hope as they lived alongside these other conceptions of hope I suggest that the Deweyan-inspired conception of hope in education is a competing story. The Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope appeared to enable Sheila and Carmen to maintain a sense of who they were and were becoming as they made sense of living with the dominant conceptions of hope in education.

With that in mind, I turn next to attend to the personal, practical, and social/theoretical considerations that arose from the learning(s) that informed how my research study unfolded and why I believe my study matters, practically.

Personal, Practical and Social/Theoretical Justifications for the Research Study

Personal justifications.

When teachers told me that they were not interested in working with outcomes as they made hope visible and accessible in their interactions, I wondered if I was beginning to fall asleep at the blackboard (Greene, 2001) again. However, I was also torn because without the grant money that stipulated working with outcomes, the teachers could not leave their classrooms to attend the ongoing professional development sessions. Hearing teachers story me as worrying about outcomes when they were more interested in working with hope-focused practices (LeMay et al., 2008) as a way of being in relationship with their students prompted me to wonder about the experiences of teachers who work with the hope-focused practices. Although this tension precipitated my research puzzle, it was not until I began to unpack the tensions in the story that I told in my candidacy proposal about making curriculum alongside Margaret and Rachel that I began to understand tensions as "a way of creating a between space, a space which can exist in educative ways" (Clandinin et. al, 2010, p. 82). I began to understand tensions as creating a space for future growth (Dewey, 1938).

As I stayed awake to Sheila and Carmen's experiences of intentionally attending to the hope-focused practices in their life stories and in their curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), alongside the tensions I felt about being perceived as a hope expert, I awakened to new learning about how I need to be with the goal setting,

critical theory, and faith-based conceptions of hope in education. I say this because, I learned, by being alongside Sheila, as we made sense of how she understood goals informing our hope and hoping that perhaps goals and hope do intersect and inform each other—especially when we are open to attending to how there is more than one way to experience and understand their intersection. When I wrote, "Sheila has much to teach me about the relationship between goals and hope. I need to stay open to what I can learn from our conversations" (Field Note, August 24, 2012) in my journal I acknowledged that Sheila had disrupted my understanding of the relationship between goals and hope. I awakened to another way of connecting hopes and goals as Sheila storied herself using goals to inform her students' hopes. Up until that moment, I believed, given my experiences alongside hope-focused counselors and the teacher in the Teachers Helping Teachers research (LeMay & Edey, 2008), that making hope visible and accessible enabled goal setting. However, by attending to Sheila's living, telling, retelling and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) about working with goals to inspire hopeful thinking, acting, feeling and relating, I began to imagine myself wondering what I might learn about myself if I were more open to the possibilities of "living with as opposed to "alongside" or in "opposition" to the dominant conceptions of hope in education. Being alongside Sheila and Carmen helped me to see that "attending to" sometimes means being open to seeing things as otherwise (Greene, 1995), which might also explain why I found myself gravitating toward Tillich's (1952) work, on making sense of the courage to be.

By attending to how Carmen storied her experiences as a creative risk taker who attempted to be alongside her students as they made sense of living a hope-focused social justice project, I thought about how I need, like Carmen, to find places and spaces where I can continue to live a competing story of being with hope. Like Carmen I imagine myself finding ways to be supported by my colleagues as a newcomer on a new educational landscape in the ways that Carmen storied herself alongside her Grade 6 colleagues as she continued to build a relationship with her students in the talking circle (Research Conversation, March 25, 2013). Carmen also awakened me to wonder how I might also attend to the gift of time. I wondered also how I could become more attentive, like Sheila, to "different perspectives" (Research Conversation, February 6, 2013), and in so doing, imagine myself attending to time as a gift to be with others as a way of living with and staying awake to how the conceptions of hope inform and are informed by each other. I now know that I need to embrace a way of being with hope that is not reductionist and formalistic but open to the possibilities of being awake to what is possible when I am challenged to consider other ways of being with hope. In other words, I need to stay awake to what I am learning as I continue to bump up against the dominant conceptions of hope in education with an understanding of learning new ways of being in the bumping up moments.

Practical justifications.

In attending to student teachers' narratives of practice, Estola (2003) determined that "student teachers' stories revealed the connection between hope and experience" and that "the main fear [for student teachers was that] over time, they may lose their sense of hope as a result of the difficulty and vulnerability of teachers' work. Some of the teachers even expressed some uncertainty about their futures as teachers," (p. 199). I heard this fear in Carmen's early sense making when she wondered if she would "make it another five years in the classroom". I wondered if Sheila's decision to take a year to travel had anything to do with her sensemaking as we attended to the narrative inquiry commonplaces in her stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). I now understand the importance of making hope visible and accessible in our curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) as a way of intentionally enhancing ways of sustaining educative experiences (Dewey, 1938) on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) of teacher education.

As I contemplated the practical justifications for my research study further in relation to my earlier readings of Hollingsworth (1994)—especially since Sheila and Carmen did not once refer to the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource during the research study, I thought about the notion of teacher knowledge opposed to knowledge for teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I thought about how Sheila and Carmen's stories of living in the midst of being with hope sharpened and became more vivid and courageous as they made sense of the Deweyan-inspired narrative

conception of hope alongside the other conceptions of hope as we attended to their experiences with the commonplaces of narrative inquiry instead of attending to the activities in the *Nurturing Hopeful Souls* resource.

Since some of this sensemaking occurred in the professional development sessions, I turned my attention to knowledge communities (Craig & Olson, 2002). I first became aware of knowledge communities in my coursework for this doctoral study when I began to unpack how the professional development sessions were different from the professional learning communities (Dufour, 2004). Knowledge communities are:

> Safe, storytelling places where educators narrate the rawness of their experiences, negotiate meaning, and authorize their own and others' interpretations of situations. They take shape around commonplaces of experience (Lane, 1988) as opposed to around bureaucratic and hierarchical relations that declare who know, what should be known . . . .Such knowledge communities can be both found and created. (p. 116)

As I reflected back on what I learned from being alongside Sheila and Carmen in the professional development sessions, I imagined the possibilities of learning alongside in future knowledge communities (Craig & Olson, 2002) with in-service and pre-service teachers. In so doing, I reimagined a way of using the commonplaces of narrative inquiry to attend to hope and hoping with the 7 C's of hope to create spaces for attending to the tensions that enable educative experiences (Dewey, 1938) as a competing story to the current, dominant conceptions of hope in education.

Social/theoretical justifications.

In my doctoral program a colleague asked if it was possible to do damage with hope. This query reminded me of a school trustee who asked, "Isn't education about hope?" when he heard that I left the classroom to make sense of my hope as an educator. These two queries reminded me of times I heard individuals, in presentations and conversations, worry about opening a can of worms when I shared stories about making hope visible and accessible in our interactions as educators. I believe that these queries, alongside what I learned in my interactions with Sheila and Carmen as we made sense of their experiences justify the importance of the research study socially and theoretically.

As a result of my inquiry with Sheila and Carmen I now know that if we do not attend to what we mean by bringing, instilling, and working with hope, that we might be drawn to work with hope in ways that do not make sense to who we are and are becoming. In so doing, we will do exactly what the storytellers in the Minerva Dialogues (1999) warned us against, that is, to impose our way of working with hope.

I believe we need to attend to, accommodate, and make spaces to discuss who we are and are becoming with hope and hoping so that we do not impose or do damage with hope—in our own life stories as well as in those that we are alongside. I believe that creating spaces to inquire into the tensions that Sheila and Carmen experienced as we made sense of their experiences of working with the Deweyan-inspired narrative conception of hope, alongside the other three dominant conceptions of hope in education

that I put forth, enabled Sheila and Carmen to imagine themselves continuing to live on the educational landscape in a way that was life sustaining.

I felt that Sheila and Carmen were able to attend to feelings of less hope as they storied how they were experiencing the increasing expectations filtering down the metaphorical conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) or from stakeholders. Both teachers storied themselves as staying awake to who they needed to be and become as they imagined themselves participating in a future that was personally meaningful (Dufault & Martocchio, 1984; Farran et al., 1995; Jevne, 1994; Stephenson, 1991). As such, they attended to their experiences with hope and hoping in educative ways (Dewey, 1938) or in ways that encouraged them to continue to grow in ways that appeared to me to be life sustaining.

Final Thoughts

As I conclude this study, I try to calm my fears as a hope-focused educator and researcher hearing the ongoing stories filtering down the metaphoric conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) that suggest we need to tighten and align standards in education as a way of making hope accessible in the "global economy". I will have to work hard to continue to find knowledge communities (Craig & Olson, 2002) to help to sustain who I am and am becoming with hope, alongside the stories of instilling and bringing hope to students so that they are able to compete in the global economy as educated citizens.

To do that, I find myself calling forth Greene's (1995) warning to imagine things as otherwise one last time:

> A general inability to conceive a better order of things can give rise to a resignation that paralyzes and prevents people from acting to bring about change . . . To call for imaginative capacity is to work for the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise. To ask for intensified realization is to see that each person's reality must be understood to be interpreted experience—and that the mode of interpretation depends on his or her situation and location in the world. . . . To tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real. (p. 19)

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